

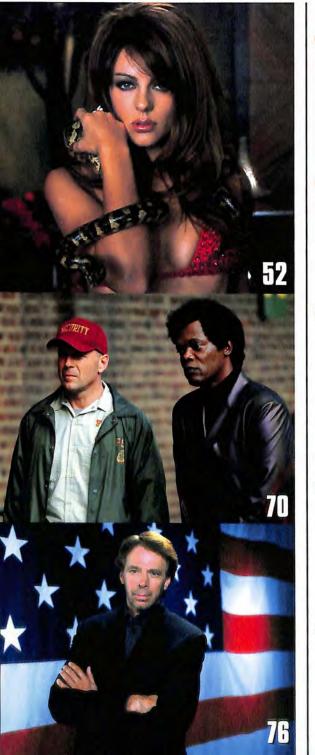
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BEDAZZLED

The best thing about the upcoming remake of the classic '60s comedy *Bedazzled*? Liz Hurley as a scantily-clad Devil any man would find it hard to say no to. Check out the photos and you'll understand...

50 THE EXORCIST

The most gut-wrenchingly spooky film ever made is back, and – yikes! – it's scarier than ever. Behind the scenes of a production that was almost as freaky as the resulting film...

20 SCARIEST MOVIES EVER

Is *The Exorcist* really the supreme fearfest of all time? We asked horror master Wes Craven to take apart 20 fiercely frightening flicks to find out. Send your inevitable "I can't believe you left out..." letters to the usual address.

WALL OF THE PROPERTY OF THE P

The new thriller from *The Sixth Sense* director M. Night Shyamalan and star Bruce Willis is shrouded in secrecy, but it's already looking every bit as jaw-dropping as its predecessor. Here's your first look.

BRUCKHEIMER

KABOOM! As the world's most explosive action-movie maker gears up his biggest project yet – the *Titanic*-dwarfing WWII disaster pic *Pearl Harbor* – TOTAL MOVIE grills him on what to expect...

Contents continued on page 6











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www.independencedaydvd.com



Total Total

Issue One • October/November 2000

11 THE WRITE STUFF

Got something to say? We don't doubt it. Write in and win - maybe.

12 COMING SOON

Thirteen pages. Fifteen new movies. It's the only previews section you'll ever need – until next issue, at least.

26 ROUGH CUT

Spider-Man! Steven Seagal! Angelina Jolie! Bender! And, um, mullets! All this and more in the news section with added relish.

48 NEXT TIME

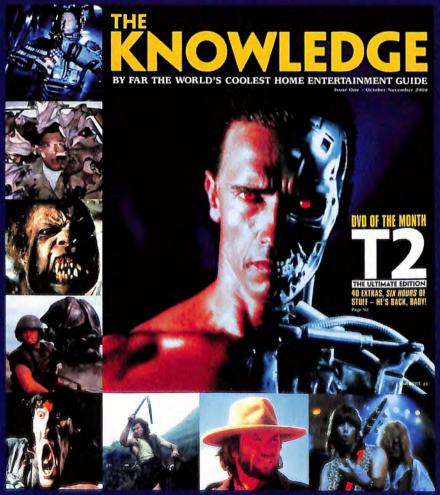
It's going to be an agonizing wait until you can get your hands on the next copy of TOTAL MOVIE. But at least you'll know what we have in store for you...

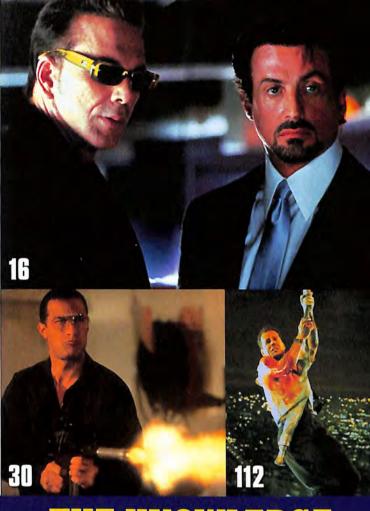
50 THE GOREY DETAILS

Founding editor of Film Threat and TOTAL MOVIE's resident man on a soapbox Chris Gore kick-starts his column by challenging Ben Affleck to a fight. Kinda.

112 HALL OF FAME

The Academy may have forgotten them, but we sure as hell won't. Presenting the first modern classic to be inducted into our hallowed halls of awesomedom (is that a word? – Ed).





85 THE KNOWLEDGE

Our coverage of DVD and all things homeentertainment-related grew and it grew until it got so big we had to give it its own magazine.

86 **DVD**

The latest news and features, plus no fewer than 46 new discs reviewed and rated. Booyah!

102 HARDWARE

Serious about your home theater hook-up? So are we. Hardware news and reviews that put the rest to shame.

106 BOOKS

Because when you're not watching movies, you're reading about them. Right?

107 MULTIMEDIA

As Hollywood's oily tentacles extend to the Internet and videogaming, we're here to keep you posted on the latest cyberstuff.

108 TELEVISION

You know, somewhere in between those cheesy Movie of the Weeks, there's some good made-for-TV stuff out there. You've just got to know where to look...

110 SOUNDTRACKS

If it's too loud, you're too old - our aural experts cast their ears over the latest batch of movie albums

Tonight's regularly scheduled programming will be preempted for a special episode of whatever the hell you want.



You won't believe what you can do with ReplayTV. It's not a VCR — it's a digital video recorder, so you can actually pause live television and do your own live instant replays. It also has a search engine, so you can punch in a keyword, say, "Golf," and it will find and record any golf program that comes on — all without videotape. If you're away from home, no problem — just go online at myreplaytv.com where you can find, program and record shows on your ReplayTV from anywhere. All this and a free lifetime subscription are why ReplayTV is the critics' choice." Call us at 877-replaytv or visit www.replaytv.com.



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From The Chief

COME WITH ME IF WANT TO LIVE

Ah, there you are. Welcome to TOTAL MOVIE! Now before you plow headlong into the thick wad of movie goodness that follows, a few words about why we're here.

TOTAL MOVIE is a new kind of movie magazine. It's written by 100% pure, cut-me-do-I-not-bleed-celluloid film fanatics. So it's not about what designer fashions the stars are wearing this month, or who's feudin' with who in the latest Hollywood power battle. NO! It's about Chuck Heston laying the smack down on those damn dirty apes, Phoebe Cates emerging from that swimming pool (you know the one we're talking about), and Bruce Willis suddenly figuring out that he's been pushing up daisies all along. In short, it's about the coolest films. Y'see, we're a little more discerning than your average movie mag. You won't find coverage of every single new release in every genre, but you will find better, hipper and more in-depth coverage of the movies you love. Bottom line: if it's in the theaters or on DVD and it rocks, you'll find it in TOTAL MOVIE.

Speaking of DVD, you've probably already noticed that there's one stuck to the back of this magazine. The format is here to stay and we're getting behind it - not just by devoting an entire mini-magazine to it (The Knowledge starts on page 85) - but by delivering a DVD packed with movie previews, short films and extra features with every issue.

This, then, is TOTAL MOVIE. Finally, a movie magazine for the rest of us. So what are you waiting for? Enjoy - and in the words of JohnnyCab, we hope you enjoy the ride.

Gary Whitta Editor-in-Chief

Total

THE FUTURE NETWORK PLC PRESENTS AN IMAGINE MEDIA PRODUCTION A GARY WHITTA MAGAZINE "TOTAL MOVIE" ASSOCIATE STEVE PALOPOLI POUTO CHRIS NEELLEY ORECOR KENT BANCROFT AND ORECTOR TOM BEJGROWICZ PRODUCT RATHLEEN FAIRWEATHER MANAGINES SARAH ELLERMAN EDIGE-ACCHRIS GORE CONTRIBUTIONS CHRIS CHARLA JEFF CHERUN DANIEL ERICKSON ANDY LOWE RON MAGID HELEN MESERVEY DANIEL MORRIS ROB PRATT PATRICK SAURIOL KEVIN P. SMITH DOUG TRUEMAN SCOTT WARDEN RON WELLS RAY ZONE GOING GARY WHITTA

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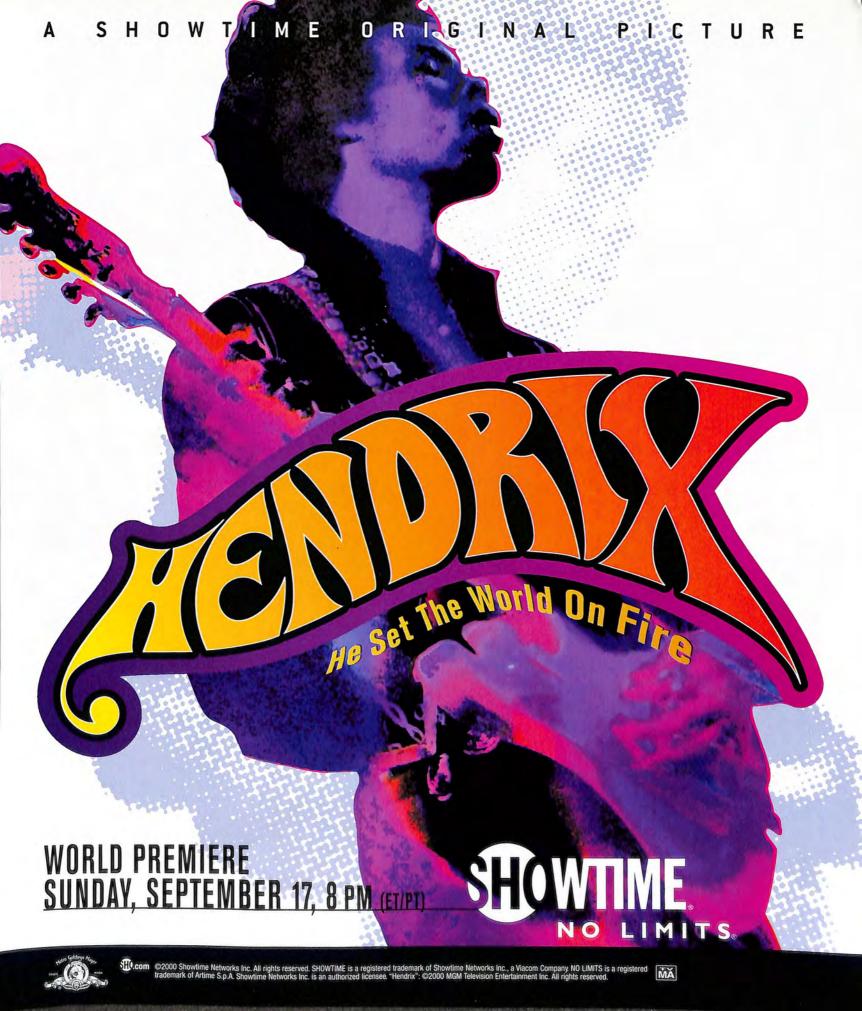
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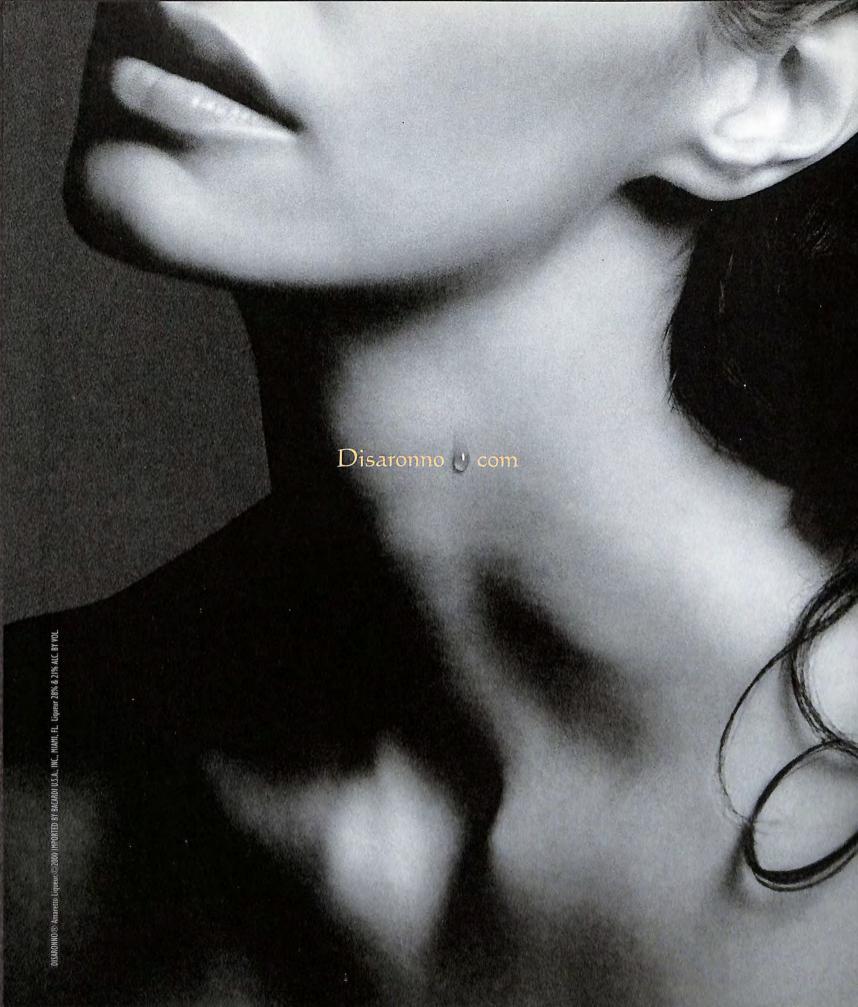
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The Write Stuff

Ready for your close-up? Send your words of wisdom to: The Write Stuff, Total Movie, 12121 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 1111, Los Angeles, CA 90025 or e-mail writestuff@total-movie.com. The best letter we receive each issue wins a copy of whatever spare DVD we happen to have lying around the office that day. This debut mailbag came courtesy of eagle-eyed readers who caught a sniff of our impending arrival on the Internet.

A SHUT-IN WRITES

Dear TOTAL MOVIE.

I love movies, so I'm just pleased as pie to see a ballsy new mag like yours. My problem is that I've also come to hate movies, or at least the movie-going experience. Growing up, I could see a new movie in a giant theater and be pretty sure most people were going to be quiet, polite, and just watch the damn thing. Nowadays the theaters are about as wide as a 747, with screens smaller than

the one I have at home. Cellphones are going off, and people are taking the calls! As a result, I've completely stopped going to movie theaters. A 5.1 sound system, widescreen high-def TV, and DVD player give me the entire movie-going experience. I can buy a DVD for less than the cost of two movie tickets, snacks, and drinks, plus I get to watch it as many times as I like and I usually get extras. So am I really missing anything by staying home?

Buddy Lowe, Dallas, TX

Of course you're missing something by staying home! Where else do you get to pay eight bucks for a watereddown Coke and a sweaty little "hot" dog? Oh, and you forgot to mention those comic geniuses doodling on the screen with their laser pointers. That one never gets old.

Anyway, since you seem determined never to leave your house again, allow us to send you a copy of The Abyss Special Edition DVD to enjoy from the comfort of your own couch. We'll just have the FedEx guy leave it by the front door in case you can't get up from under all those remote controls and potato chips.

BOTTOM FEEDER

Dear Gary.

I hear that your new mag is only going to cover movies that kick ass. Very cool. I trust TOTAL MOVIE will also examine films that show ass, too? I hope T&A will be covered. Too many magazines have dropped that portion of coverage in an attempt to appeal to the dreaded "family" market.

Craig Cardimon, via the Internet

Stay tuned for an upcoming feature "20 Greatest Ass Shots in the Movies," which the team has been exhaustively "researching" for several weeks now. But hey, we love family films, too. Just look at The Stepfather - perfect for teaching the kids what'll happen if they "disappoint" daddy.

LETHAL MUSKET

Dear TOTAL MOVIE.

Just saw The Patriot and a thought struck me - did anyone else notice the staggering similarities between this and that other Mel classic Lethal Weapon? Check it out - in The Patriot, Mel's a slightly crazy expert marksman with a shadowy past who lives out in the middle of nowhere. Come on, Benjamin Martin/Martin Riggs? He even has a black partner (well, kinda) who's counting the days until retirement! I'm amazed he didn't do his Curly impression to round it all off. The spooky similarities go on... well, I can't think of any more right now but you have to admit it's kinda spooky. Do I win a T-shirt or something for this?

Paul Rand, Rochester, NY

THREATENING BEHAVIOR

I just read about TOTAL MOVIE on the Film Threat website.

That's such great news! I used to love the print version of Film Threat, I read it since the grimy Detroit days. It was like a club, I loved writing outrageous letters and responding to their contests. It was great fun. Now, it looks like TOTAL MOVIE will take its place, and I'm excited as hell about it.

You can count on me to be a subscriber! Mark Sieber, Hampton,

VA

We're all FT fans too, so we're psyched to have founder Chris Gore and other writers from "the Threat" on board. Only problem is, now that Gore's got his own TV show, he won't return our calls.

MMMMM... SHINY

Dear TOTAL MOVIE.

When I read you were launching a new movie magazine with a DVD, my first reaction was wow. But my second reaction was, "What the hell are they going to put on it?" I just paid

600 bucks for a top-of-the-line Sony player, and if you think I'm going to feed it just any old crap, you're wrong. Josh Hislop, via the Internet

Good question, Josh - and one which this month's debut disc should answer nicely. Our DVD features the coolest up-to-theminute trailers in digital quality, so you don't have to spend hours downloading fuzzy inch-wide versions from the Internet or playing "trailer roulette" at the theater to catch the previews you want to see. We're also serving up a selection of short films so you can start building your own collection, and killer DVD extras - director commentaries, out-takes, deleted scenes, behind-the-scenes features, etc. We feel confident that your shiny new DVD player will not feel dirtied by spinning our disc...

So here's the deal. We thought it'd be funny to have TOTAL MOVIE tank tops made as promotional items, but for some strange reason they're proving difficult to give away, even in a hot town like LA. So in a lastditch effort to clear out some of these boxes cluttering up the office, we're offering a FREE wife-beater to anyone who sends us a snapshot good enough to print. Maybe everyone's always telling you

how much you look like Bruce Willis. Maybe you live near a location made famous by a movie. Or maybe you recently bumped into a famous movie celeb and snapped a photo of you with them before security could wrestle you to the ground. Whatever it is, we want to see it. Send your snaps to the address at the top of the page, and don't forget to speci-

Calm down, fellas. You only win the tank top.

fy M, L, or XL.



On the Rocks

A classic recipe: Disaronno over ice. To be enjoyed after work, after dinner, or after that oh-so lucrative dot.com IPO.

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Light a Fire





IVIE N **November 10** IN A NUTSHELL: Formerly known as Navy Diver, this one stars Cuba Gooding Jr. in the true story of Carl Brashear, who in the 1950s became the US PITTILLS: There's a tendency in true-life stories Navy's first-ever Master Diver. Expect plenty of undersea action mixed in with lots of "you-canlike this to go for the jugular and lay the emotion do-it" pathos and even some courtroom drama for on thick. If Men of Honor manages to make it through its triumph-of-the-will storyline without good measure. tripping over its own sentimentality, we'll be POTENTIAL: We like the idea of an underwater impressed. Top Gun, wherein our hero rises from his humble TOTAL MOVIE BAYS: DeNiro's in it, so of course roots to become the best of the soggy best. And if we're there. But there's a fine line between powerful there's one sure sign of a good flick, it's Robert drama and schmaltz, so we'll reserve judgment until DeNiro, who threatens once again to steal the show we see what director George Tillman, Jr. (Soul Food) in a major supporting role as Master Chief Billy Sunday, Brashear's ball-breaking mentor and boss. has done with it. 14 Total MOVIE



GHT CARTER October 20

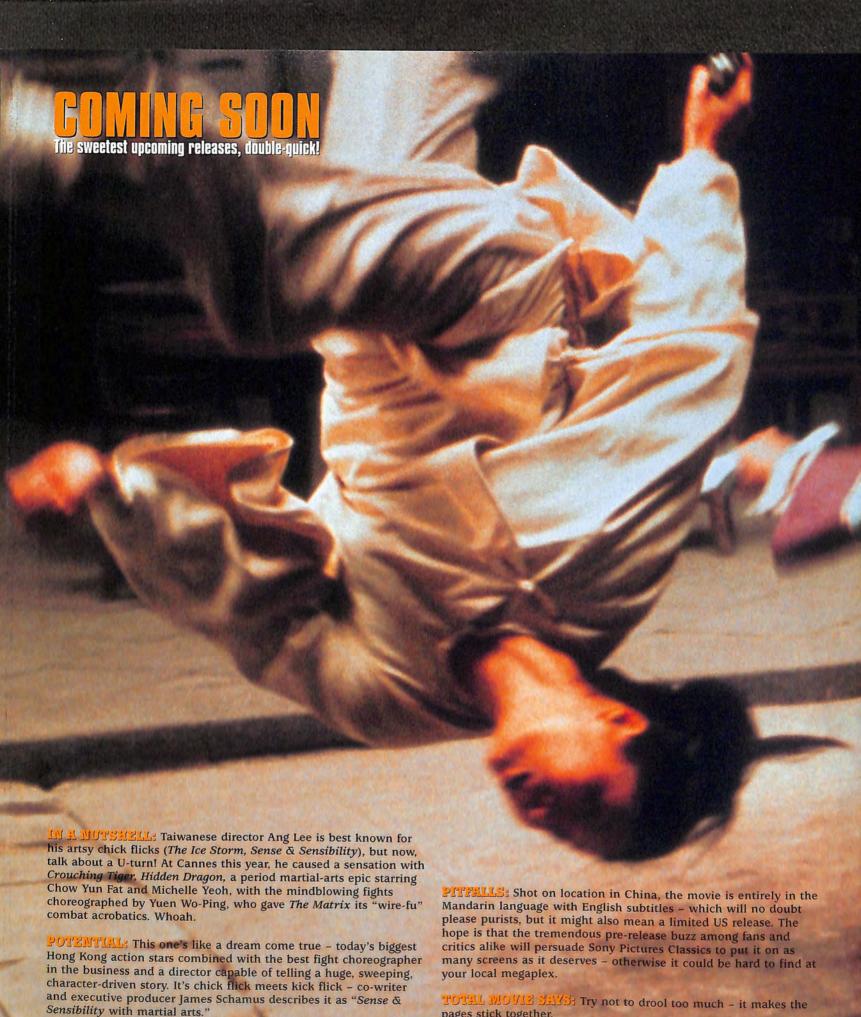
IN A NUTSHELL: Back on the screen for the first time since 1997's Cop Land, Stallone heads up this remake of the 1971 Michael Caine classic as Jack Carter, a bad-ass New York mob enforcer who travels to Los Angeles to kill the sons-of-bitches who murdered his brother. Heads are cracked, asses are kicked and bad guys thoroughly pummeled as Carter goes on a vengeance-fueled rampage through LA's criminal underworld.

POTENTIAL: The script's written by Ted Lewis, who wrote the original, and David McKenna, who wrote American History X – a promising team. Steven Soderbergh's awesome The Limey proved that these old-school one-man-army thrillers can still pay off in spades, so our hopes are high. And yes, Michael Caine is back, too.

PITFALLS: Even Mel Gibson had a hard time getting audiences to root for the bad guy in the underrated *Payback*, so what chance Stallone? In the 1990s he served up such crud as *Judge Dredd*, *Assassins*, *Daylight*, *Oscar*, *The Specialist* and *Cliffhanger* (come on, it was crap) – not exactly encouraging evidence of his choices on material. Oh, and Mickey Rourke's in it.

TOTAL MOVIE SAYS: Go rent the original for an idea about why we're excited to see this one – Stallone's stepped in a few turds lately, true, but we have a feeling this hard-edged crime caper will prove that he can still get it done.





pages stick together.

CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON December 8

Children by the state of the st



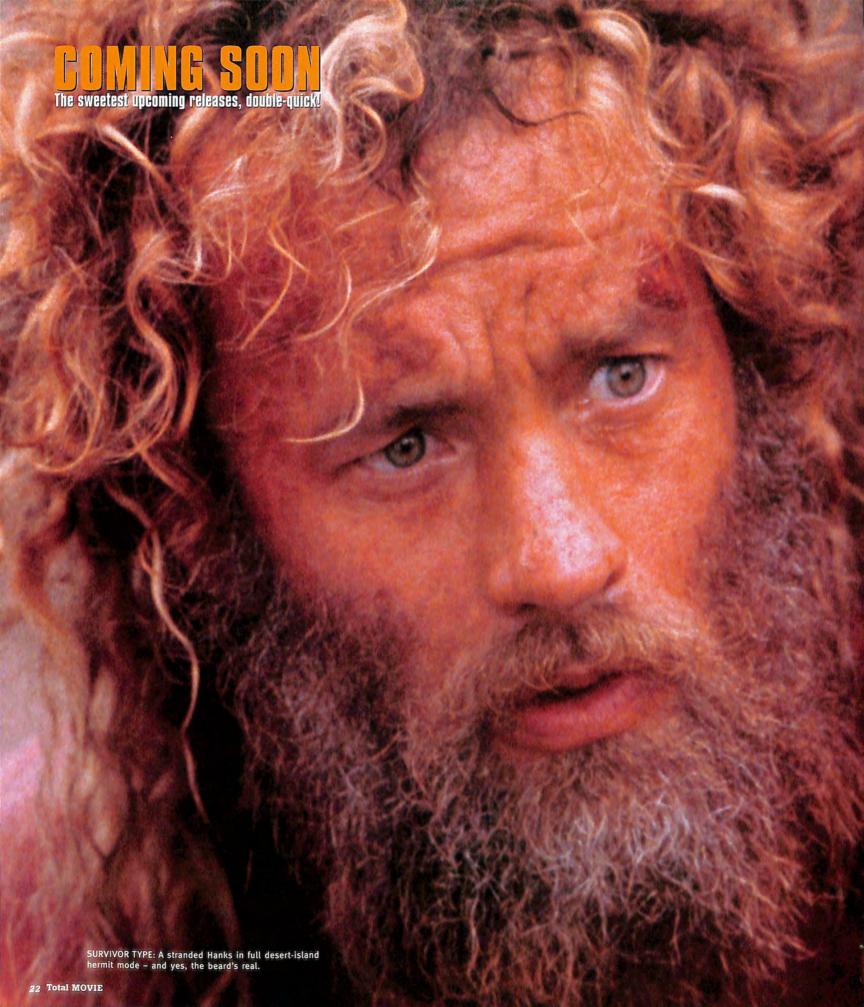
O BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU?

December 22



The sweetest opeoming releases, double-quick





CAST AWAY December

IN A NUTSITELL Tom Hanks is Chuck Noland, a Federal Express executive (now there's a new one) who gets shipwrecked alone on a desert island and is forced to fend for himself against the elements. Hey, at least he doesn't have to worry about getting voted off.

POTEMER Well, it's directed by Robert Zemeckis, whose stuff is hard to argue with - Back to the Future, Who Framed Roger Rabbit, Forrest Gump, Contact... even with What Lies Beneath and Death Becomes Her festering on his resume, his batting average is higher than most - and Hanks' eye for material just seems to get better and better...

PITEMILS: Anybody want to spend two hours watching Tom Hanks grow a beard? Come on, even DiCaprio couldn't get people to show up for his feature-length holiday video. At the very least we expect big audiences among the obese, who'll be dying to know how he lost all that weight (Hanks went on a real-life crash weight-gain/weight-loss program and shot the movie in separate segments, one as a fatty, the other as an emaciated hermit).

TOTHL MOVIZ SAYS: Hard to say, but our money's on Zemeckis and Hanks, coupled with a hot Survivor-style premise, serving up a good 'un. Especially if Hanks has to eat a rat – something we've been wanting to see ever since The Man With One Red Shoe.

COMING SOON

The sweetest upcoming releases, double-quick!



IN A NUTSHELL: Arnie's a chopper pilot who survives a crash, then comes home to discover he's been replaced by a clone. Before you know it, he's fighting a sinister conspiracy planning to replace the whole world with doppelgängers!

TOTAL MOVIE SAYS: We still love Arnie round these parts, despite the fact that his last four movies all sucked. So we're rooting for the aging beefcake to find a sorely-needed return to old-school form – and this hardcore sci-fi caper could be just the ticket. November 10



IN A NUTSHELL: The Grinch steals Christmas. Only this time it's a real Grinch – Jim Carrey, no less – and überdirector Ron Howard (Apollo 13) is the man in charge of making sure Dr. Seuss doesn't wind up spinning in his grave. TOTAL MOVIE SAYS: Early word is that the movie's a lot of fun, and that the Digital Domain-supplied visual effects and Carrey's performance are awesome – but when you're dealing with (and greatly expanding) such holy relics as this, chances are somebody's going to get hurt. November 17



IN A NUTSHELL: What would've happened if F.W. Murnau had been so desperate to make a truly realistic vampire film back in 1922 that he hired an actual vampire to play the title role in his classic Nosferatu? Now you get to find out.

TOTAL MOVIE SAYS: Willem Dafoe pretending to be a vampire pretending to be a human pretending to be a vampire? Where do we sign up? Throw in John Malkovich as Murnau and you've got a vampire film that's virtually guaranteed not to suck. December 29



IN A NUTSHELL: Matt Damon is the suave golfer, Charlize Theron his squeeze and Will Smith his eponymous, widsom-spouting caddy in this Robert Redford-directed period golf fable based on the Steven Pressfield novel.

TOTAL MOVIE SAYS: Sounds like A Fairway Runs Through It to us. Or maybe The Course Whisperer. Good golf movies are few and far between, so we're hopeful for now – let's just hope Redford doesn't slather on the schmaltz and instead delivers a golfing Natural. **November 3**



IN A NUTSHELL: Yet another Saturday Night Live character gets his own feature-length adventure – this time it's Tim Meadows' soul-soaked womanizer Leon Phelps, on a quest to end his misogynistic ways and settle down with his dream woman (i.e. a rich one).

TOTAL MOVIE SAYS: It's an *SNL* movie, so its chances of actually being funny are about as predictable as a coin flip. But as one of our favorite skits, we reckon *The Ladies Man* has a better-than-average shot. **October 13**



IN A NUTSHELL: It's an all-star female frenzy (Helen Hunt! Liv Tyler! Farrah Fawcett! Laura Dern!) in Robert Altman's latest mega-ensemble bonanza, in which an overstressed Dallas gynecologist (Richard Gere) escapes his manic home and work life by gettin' jiggy with the local golf pro (Hunt). TOTAL MOVIE SAYS: Altman's due for a good 'un after The Gingerbread Man and Cookie's Fortune vanished without a trace, and something more comedic (yes, it's a comedy) could be just the change he – and we – need. October 13



IN A NUTSHELL: WWII's cinematic renaissance continues, but now it's the Russians' turn as Jean-Jacques Annaud (Seven Years in Tibet) rounds up a tasty cast (Jude Law, Joe Fiennes, Bob Hoskins, Ed Harris, Rachael Weisz) for this tale of love'n'blood set against the siege of Stalingrad.

TOTAL MOVIE SAYS: There's always room for one more war movie, and this one's gritty setting (the Russian front made the rest of the war look like a tea party) plus a cool cast (Ed Harris as a Nazi sniper!) has us fired up. **December**



IN A NUTSHELL: Denzel Washington takes on yet another true story, this time as a 1970s high-school football coach fighting pressure and prejudice to lead his team to victory in this Bruckheimer-fueled sports biopic. Will Patton threatens to steal the show, as always.

TOTAL MOVIE SAYS: Dead Poets Society with balls? That's how it's being pitched – a blub-worthy, life-affirming drama with plenty of hard hits and groin injuries to give it some juice. Sounds good to us. **September 29**



IN A NUTSHELL: "It's a bizarre mix of haute couture and high drama when the world's überbabes begin disappearing in a cloud of smoke from international runways. Who's stealing the supermodels?" No, we're not making this up. TOTAL MOVIE SAYS: We've all heard the rumors of a nightmarish production, a script re-written over and over and over, and a constantly squabbling cast and crew. So of course it demands to be seen, if only to find out what the hell emerged from that whole mess. November 3

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The latest movie news and rumors, and a whole mess of other stuff that's too strange to go anywhere else...

OH, WHAT A TANGLED

After years of lawsuits, U-turns and false starts, Spider-Man is finally ready to crawl all over the big screen. TOTAL MOVIE traces the web-slinger's twisty-turny path to Hollywood...

At time of writing, Spider-

Man is in the final stages

of pre-production, with

Scott Rosenberg (Con Air.

latest writer to contribute a

script polish. Casting's

going be a bitch, but

Raimi has

Gone in 60 Seconds) the

t's been nearly a decade since you should have seen the Spider-Man movie. You remember what that was supposed to have been, don'tcha? Think back to the days when a pre-Titanic James Cameron spoke of his dream gig - a megabudget live-action Spidey flick. What followed was not the superhero movie event of the decade, but rather a series of financial screw-ups and lawsuits. Even

after Cameron went on to make the top-grossing film of all time, his King of the World status couldn't untangle the web of red tape surrounding the project. Two years ago, anyone in Hollywood would have given you crummy odds that you'd be seeing a Spider-Man movie anytime soon. Today, ask any studio exec in Hollywood and they'll say it's going to be one

of the biggest films of next year.

The radical shift in this equation came when Sony Pictures arrived on the scene, using its to take care of the

superpowered wallet problems that had

been holding things up, primarily working out an arrangement with Marvel Comics. As part of the undisclosed deal between Marvel and Sony, the studio got its hands on Cameron's script treatment, setting out his vision of what a Spider-Man film should be. While Cameron's Spidey was mostly faithful to the original Stan

Lee/Steve Ditko version, his "scriptment" also remade Peter Parker into a modern kid with organic web-shooters, a corporate supervillain, and the chance for Peter to get laid and even occasionally say the word fuck. Hey, times change,

As part of Sony's deal, the studio was free to use Cameron's scriptment any way it saw fit - and let's face it, when the guy whose stuff you just bought wins multiple Oscars and makes the biggest box-office hit ever, you don't just chuck it out the window. So Sony brought in screenwriter David Koepp (Jurassic Park, Stir of Echoes) to flesh it out.

Nicholas Hammond as Spidey in his last live-action romp on the 1978 TV series.

Having already created a

superhero of his own (Darkman).

Sam Raimi was a popular choice

for director among Spidey fans.

Koepp made only minor alterations; a name here, a scene added there. Once Koepp's draft had been turned in last November, Sony started shopping for a director. After considering David Fincher, Jan DeBont and Chris Columbus, the studio decided on Sam Raimi, best known for the Evil Dead flicks and no stranger to the superhero genre with his own creation, the faceswapping Darkman

But the problem with Koepp and Cameron's script was the supervillains - they were the kind of bad guys we'd expect to see in any run-of-the-mill action flick. After all, this is supposed to be the Marvel universe; we want to see guys with names like ElektroMan and Doctor Apocalypse flying around on hoverplatforms with green jockstraps and firing lightning bolts!

Raimi apparently agrees. Word is he's been re-tooling the script himself. replacing the no-name baddies with heavy-hitting Marvel villains such as

Green Goblin and Doctor Octopus. This latest move is further proof that Sony's serious about ensuring Spider-Man fires on all cylinders; after laying out all that green to acquire the property and hire a top-dollar screenwriter to adapt it, only to dump it in favor of the new director's vision, Sony also paid off Paramount Pictures to speed up post-production on Raimi's next film, The Gift, and get him working sooner on Spidey. Whatever Raimi pitched to Sony to land the gig, he must've done one helluva job.

Even after James Cameron made the top-grossing film of all time, his King of the World status couldn't untangle the red tape surrounding the project.

> already made it over the biggest hurdle by finally deciding on an actor to play Peter Parker. Just as we went to press, Tobey Maguire (Pleasantville, Wonder Boys) signed on to slip into Spidey's tights. "As an actor, Tobey is a director's dream," says Raimi of his choice. "He has all the qualities we were looking for in our Peter Parker."

So, young Tobey Maguire is all set to take on the most coveted role in Hollywood as Daily Bugle cub photographer Peter Parker. A long-time favorite of Raimi's, Maguire won everybody over by working out so he'd be buff enough to look cool in the Spidey suit.

True Believers! - Patrick Sauriol

Sony's already sat down

a release date planned for.

late 2001. See you in line,



HOLY DEVELOPMENT HELL!

Your friendly neighborhood web-slinger ain't the only superhero fighting cinematic injustice to make it to the big screen...



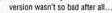
DAREDEVIL

Blind criminal attorney by day, rooftop-bounding vigilante by night! If that sounds silly, you've obviously never read the Marvel comic, a classic candidate for adaptation that has attracted the likes of Kevin Smith (who has written for the comic) and Chris Columbus (now tied up on Harry Potter). But this one seems doomed to wallow for a while longer – nothing's expected until at least 2003.



Roger Corman took a low-budget crack at bringing this X-Men-style superhero team to the big screen,

but the results were so shockingly bad that it was never released. Chris Columbus was rumored to direct Fox's "real" version for the longest time, but now the latest name in the frame is Raja Gosnell, who gave us, um, *Big Momma's House.* Hmm, maybe that Corman





SUPERMAN

Where to begin? Superman Lives (or Superman

Reborn, or whatever it's called this week) has become the most infamously troubled superhero project in Hollywood – Kevin Smith's script was rejected, Nicolas Cage and Tim Burton both quit the project, and now... um... nobody seems to know. Latest news is that screenwriter William Wisher (Terminator 2) wrote the most recent script, and Dinosaur director Ralph Zontag may have been offered the directing gig. But it looks like the

Man of Steel just can't get off the ground this time.



HELLBOY

Guillermo Del Toro, who directed Mimic and is also slated for Blade 2, is in the frame to write and direct the big-screen adaptation of Mike Mignola's series about a demon with a metal fist who renounces his evil origins to fight for the good guys. Lawrence Gordon Productions (Event Horizon, Mystery Men) has the rights but is still shopping around for a studio.



THE HULK

"Hulk smash!" Well, we'd be mad too if our movie debut had been stuck in development hell for so long. Latest word is that Gale Anne Hurd (*The Terminator, The Abyss*) will produce it for Universal, and that Michael Tolkin (*The Player, Deep Impact*) is on board to write it. But still no director, and no word on the rumor that the big green guy will be entirely computer-generated. Four words: don't

hold your breath.



PREACHER

Garth Ennis' controversial ongoing tale of a renegade Texas priest and an Irish vampire on a quest to confront God and make him answer for his mistakes has attracted director Rachel Tallaby (Tank Girl) and Ennis has already turned in the script, but beyond that the project seems to have stalled.



WATCHMEN

what it's worth.

Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons' classic graphic
novel about a band of superheroes rejected by society was once set up to be
adapted by Terry Gilliam, but you can just add it to the list of fabled Gilliam
projects that will probably never get made. Warner Bros still has the rights, for



Another Alan Moore classic, this time

about a masked vigilante fighting the power in an alternative future in which Britain is run by neo-fascists, has attracted some top-flight talent – Joel Silver is attached to produce, and word is that Larry and Andy Wachowski (*The Matrix*) are big fans and have a script ready and waiting to go. But with two *Matrix* sequels to take care of first, this one looks fated to sit on the back burner for a while yet...



FROM HELL

Okay, let's at least try to end on a positive note – this meticulously-researched and exhaustive graphic re-telling of the Jack the Ripper story by Alan Moore (the guy sure gets around) and Eddie Campbell is actually being made into a movie by 20th Century Fox. Yes, it's true – The Hughes Brothers (Menace 2 Society, American Pimp) are currently filming the project in Prague, with Johnny Depp and Heather Graham among the cast. Fox doesn't have a release date for it yet, but expect to see it sometime next year.

Chick Flick Cheat Sheet

Everything you need to seem like a Sensitive Movie Guy.
Use it now; thank us later.

It's an age-old problem; women always insist on seeing movies about "issues" and "feelings." They want wrenching heartfelt emotion, lots of painterly shots of the sumptuous English countryside, and people prancing around in foppish nineteenth-century clothes.

Clearly there's no good reason to subject yourself to such coma-inducing crap when there are perfectly good movies with car chases, kung-fu and 'splosions to go see instead. But the problem remains: how do you display your Sensitive Movie Guy side without having to actually sit through this stuff?

Simple: let TOTAL MOVIE take the bullet for you. Thanks to us, you can now earn invaluable "sensitivity points" by feigning knowledge of today's crucial chick flicks. Simply refer to our handy cut-out-and-keep cheat sheet, and you'll soon be able to spew forth all the relevant, convincing details you need to woo the babe of your choice.

WHERE THE HEART IS

(out on DVD, October 31)

IN A NUTSHELL: Natalie Portman plays a pregnant teenager who gets ditched by her jerky boyfriend, finding comfort in a makeshift family of wacky and eccentric small-town folk.

REY INSIGHT: Boyfriends can be asses, and sometimes a girl just needs to make a new start.

BIG EMOTIONAL SCENE: Hiding out in a Wal-Mart, Portman gives birth to her baby girl.

WHY THIS MOVIE IS IMPORTANT TO YOUR DATE: She feels

why this movie is important to your date: She feels unappreciated by men, and by telling her that you adored the character of the suffering girlfriend, you win points for being sensitive to a young woman's uncertain place in the world.



BUT I'M A CHEERLEADER

(in theaters now)

IN A NUTSHELL: Natasha Lyonne's parents think she might be a lesbian, so they send her to a "camp" where gay teens are supposed to be "rehabilitated." Once there, she discovers that she actually is a lesbian and falls in love with another girl at the camp.

KEY INSIGHT: Know yourself and be true to yourself. **BIG EMOTIONAL SCENE:** Natasha and Clea get down and dirty. Emotional, yet oh-so-very watchable.

WHY THIS MOVIE IS IMPORTANT TO YOUR DATE: She's suffered from parental and societal expectations, and sympathizes with the young lesbian's plight.



KEEPING THE FAITH

(out on DVD, October 10)

IN A NUTSHELL: A priest (Edward Norton) and a rabbi (Ben Stiller) have been friends since boyhood, but now they're both attracted to their grown-up childhood friend Jenna Elfman (who's a Scientologist). Cue "hilarious" consequences.

KEY INSIGHT: We may subscribe to different creeds, but the essential human emotions are common to us all.

BIG EMOTIONAL SCENE: Norton is almost excommunicated from the Catholic Church after his devotion is called into question.
WHY THIS MOVIE IS IMPORTANT TO YOUR DATE: She respects the differences in people, and thinks this movie shows how we can all be different and yet still love one another.



RETURN TO ME

(out on DVD, 2001)

IN A NUTSHELL: David Duchovny unknowingly falls in love with the transplant recipient of his dead wife's heart (Minnie Driver). KEY INSIGHT: Life goes on, and we have to put away the pain of the past and carry on with life and love.

BIG EMOTIONAL SCENE: Duchovny discovers in mid-romance that Minnie's got his wife's ticker. With more of those oh-so-hilarious consequences!

why his movie is important to your date: She's had past loves that she still has regrets or longings about, and this movie helped her to realize that the past needs to be put behind us. This actually benefits you in the sack.





NEW -



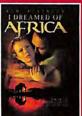
MEN IN BLACK COLLECTOR'S SERIES



ANY GIVEN SUNDA



BOOGIE NIGHTS PLATINUM SERIES



I DREAMED OF AFRICA



MISSION TO MARS



HIGH FIDELITY



THE GREEN MIL



THE MATRIX



BRAVEHEART



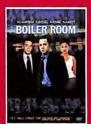
THE TALENTED MR. RIPLEY



THE NEXT BEST THING



THE CIDER HOUSE RULES



BOILER ROOM



AUSTIN POWERS
PLATINUM SERIES



FRIDAY
PLATINUM SERIES



NEXT FRIDAY
PLATINUM SERIES



STAND BY ME SPECIAL EDITION



MAGNOLIA
PLATINUM SERIES



TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY ULTIMATE EDITION

-VHS



MEN IN BLACK SPECIAL EDITION



STIGMATA



THE THOMAS CROWN AFFAIR



JAKOB THE LIAR



RANDOM HEARTS



THIS IS SPINAL TAP SPECIAL EDITION

NEW LOW PRICE



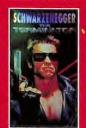
SOUTH PARK VOLUME 1



SOUTH PARK VOLUME 2



SOUTH PARK VOLUME 3



THE TERMINATOR



TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY

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HARD TO KILL: SEAGAL 20

The chubby chop-socky master plots his comeback



o can TOTAL MOVIE get things done, or what? In the very same issue that our columnist Chris Gore bemoans the loss of some of our favorite blockheaded action stars (see page 50), we're thrilled (well, not quite thrilled, but moderately interested, maybe) to announce the imminent big-screen return of Steven Seagal.

Yes, you read that right. The Buddhist bad-ass just finished filming Artisan Entertainment's Ticker for director Albert Pyun, who gave us such classics as Omega Doom, Nemesis 4: Death Angel, and Brain Smasher: A Love Story. Seagal will play a bomb-disposal expert called Glass (yes, Glass) alongside Tom Sizemore and Dennis Hopper. No word yet on the release date, but Seagal isn't waiting around to find out - he's already moved onto his next project, working with überproducer Joel Silver and Romeo Must Die director Andrzej Bartkowiak for a sensitive-sounding project called Exit Wounds. In the movie based on John Westermann's novel, Seagal will star alongside rapper DMX as an inner-city cop who infiltrates a corrupt precinct.

But hold on! Are we talking about the same Steven Seagal? The wooden, can't-acteven-by-action-movie-standards Seagal? The Seagal whose waistline ballooned in inverse proportion to his movies' box-office receipts, culminating in 1998 with an unceremonious straight-to-video release of his lethal-virus "thriller" The Patriot? Yes, we are. No, really! Word is, the porcine prima donna has been a-puffin' and a-pantin' down at the gym in an attempt to get back down to his old fighting weight. At this rate, he'll be bitch-slapping bad guys again in no time. Go, Steve! No pain, no gain!

MAY REMEMBER

As the great man returns, TOTAL MOVIE takes a tour through his glimmering movie career...



ABOVE THE LAW (1988) PEOPLE KILLED: 12*

Seagal IS Nico Toscani, a renegade cop who doesn't play by the book but who gets results, untangling a sinister CIA conspiracy.

NOTABLE FOR: Very little besides being Seagal's debut, which he earned after impressing mega-agent Michael Ovitz during a stint as his personal trainer. Oh, and for for some inexplicable reason being renamed Nico for the European market.



MARKED FOR DEATH (1990) PEOPLE KILLED: 15

Seagal IS John Hatcher, a renegade DEA agent who doesn't play by the book but who gets results, out to take down a Jamaican drug cartel led by the evil Screwface. NOTABLE FOR: Rapid degeneration into surreal voodoo-related plot twists in third "act," and groveling post-credits apology to the Jamaican people, assuring viewers that the movie is just fiction. As if there were any confusion there.



HARD TO KILL (1990) PEOPLE KILLED: 13

Seagal IS Mason Storm (yes, really), a renegade cop who doesn't play by the book but who gets results, recently awakened from a seven-year coma with a mission to knock off the sleazebags who put him there. And shag Kelly LeBrock.

NOTABLE FOR: Hilarious just-out-of-coma hospital gurney chase scene, rivaling virtually anything post-Stooges.



OUT FOR JUSTICE (1991) PEOPLE KILLED: 10

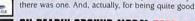
Seagal IS Gino Felino, a renegade cop who doesn't play by the book but who gets results, headed for a lethal showdown with the evil drug kingpin who's been his enemy ever since the two were in short pants.

NOTABLE FOR: Seagal's interesting fashion foray into beret territory, and for being remarkably mean-spirited, even by Seagal standards.



UNDER SIEGE (1992) PEOPLE KILLED: 50

Seagal IS Casey Ryback, a renegade, um, galley cook who doesn't play by the book but who gets results, taking it upon himself to single-handedly liberate the USS Missouri nutty terrorists who plan to set off the onboard nukes. NOTABLE FOR: Erika Eleniak's topless birthday cake entrance: a DVD-pauser if ever





ON DEADLY GROUND (1994) PEOPLE KILLED: 30 Seagal IS Forrest Taft, a renegade environmental agent who doesn't play by the book but who gets results, tasked by an Eskimo chief to defend his people's Alaskan homeland. NOTABLE FOR: Being "directed" by Seagal himself. And for Michael Caine's career lowlight as an ultra-evil oil executive, who apparently has half his company's crude product applied directly to his hair.

UNDER SIEGE 2

UNDER SIEGE 2: DARK TERRITORY (1995) PEOPLE KILLED: 23

Seagal IS Casey Ryback again, a renegade cook who still doesn't play by the book but who still gets results, this time stuck on a train with a bunch of satellite-jacking terrorists. NOTABLE FOR: Eric Bogosian, obviously smart enough to see the funny side of the whole thing and thereby delivering one of the more refreshing bad-guy turns in recent movie memory



EXECUTIVE DECISION (1996) PEOPLE KILLED: 17

Seagal IS Austin Travis, a renegade special ops colonel who actually does play by the book and therefore fails to get results, in this surprisingly peppy airline hijack caper. NOTABLE FOR: Seagal getting killed in the first act and leaving it all up to Kurt Russell to sort out.



THE GLIMMER MAN (1996) PEOPLE KILLED: 17

Seagal IS Jack Cole, a renegade mystical new-age cop who doesn't play by the book (that's better!) but who gets results, teamed up with Keenan Ivory Wayans of all people, on the trail of a serial killer.

NOTABLE FOR: A return to Seagal formula, as our now slightly corpulent hero performs his trademark "everybody in the place will now be thrown through that window" scene.



FIRE DOWN BELOW (1997) PEOPLE KILLED: 7

Seagal IS Jack Taggart, a renegade EPA agent who doesn't play by the rules but who gets results, out to punish the evil suits (led by Kris Kristofferson) who are dumping toxic waste into his beloved Kentucky homeland.

NOTABLE FOR: Seagal's unfortunate attempt to branch out as a musician, strumming his six-string both on-screen and on the movie's soundtrack. Ouch



THE PATRIOT (1998) PEOPLE KILLED: OH, WE GIVE UP
No, not the good one with Mel Gibson. Here, Seagal IS Wesley McLaren, a renegade doctor etc., etc., out to find the cure for a lethal virus unleashed by a military dictator. NOTABLE FOR: Replacing the martial arts and action scenes with lecturing speeches about the benefits of alternative medicine, thereby ensuring its release into straight-tovideo hell, and putting Seagal's career on pause. Until now, it seems.

*all fatality statistics are approximate, but they sound about right.



DIRECTORS WITH BEARDS

Every month in TOTAL MOVIE, a down'n'dirty guide to Hollywood's hirsute helmers. And since Jaws is currently celebrating its 25th Anniversary, let's kick

#1 STEVEN SPIELBERG

Oh, I know this! When he was a kid, he used to charge his friends to get in to see his home movies, didn't he? That's the rumor. Allegedly, he even sold popcorn.

off with...

The little bastard.
Um, "precocious" is probably
the word you're looking for.
He completed his first scripted
feature film when he was only 12.
A year later he won a local prize
for a 40-minute war movie called
Escape to Nowhere.

Don't tell me – he was directing TV commercials at 15. Almost. After film studies at California State, he was signed by Universal as a TV director at 20 – on a seven-year contract. At Universal, the boy wonder directed a few episodes of Columbo and Marcus Welby, M.D. before taking on his first TV movie: Duel.

Ah, the demon juggernaut! Exactly. Dennis Weaver starred as a travelling salesman pursued by a seemingly driver-less truck. It became an instant cult classic and Universal repaid Spielberg with a shot at a theatrical release.

I heard he got cocky and asked United Artists to let him direct a Bond movie.

He did, and they said no. So he did *The Sugariand Express*, another road movie, this time about a fugitive couple. Not a huge hit, but it didn't lose money either, and it rubber-stamped his directorial credibility. So, when an adaptation of a trashy Peter Benchley novel about a killer shark came along...

...he alienated the crew by insisting on filming at sea, over-ran the shooting schedule by 100 days and had to film around an unimpressive animatronic not-so-special effect.

Well yeah, but from an \$8.5 million budget, Jaws went on to gross \$260 million, the summer "event" movie was born and a 27-year-old Spielberg joined the ranks of A-list directors overnight.

Could he do no wrong? Three words: Nineteen Forty One. But he bounced back by getting together with fellow beard George Lucas for the first of the Indiana Jones movies. Oh, and then he did E.T. The massive success of that one made him rich and powerful enough to sit back and produce (Back to the Future, Who Framed Roger Rabbit?) and indulge his more "adult" side by directing the dull (Hook), the grand (Empire of the Sun) and the sentimental (Always, The Color Purple).

Ah, the "S"-word.
Yep. Ever since E.T., the critics have nailed his only apparent flaw – over-sentimentality served up with cloying pay-offs.

So, how did he balance his commercial side with his grown-up side?
By releasing Jurassic Park and Schindler's List in the same year (1993). Made a fortune with the former, and finally won a shelf-load of Oscars with the latter.

Tell me something I don't know. Spielberg tends to appear in his own movies as a reflection (in the glass of the phone booth at the end of *Duel*, in the TV screen in *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*. Armchair psychologists, go figure. Oh, and Tom Selleck was the original choice for Indiana Jones.

BEARDY BITS

Most likely to be remembered for: inventing the big-budget, bigger-grossing blockbuster. Hard to imagine: Steven Spielberg presents: The John Holmes Story.

Should remake: Jaws – but only the rubber shark bits. How

the rubber shark bits. How about a real Special Edition with a CGI snapper? Never forget: Close Encounters

of the First Kind: a the-truth-isout-there tale long before it became trendy. Best Forgotten: 1941,

The Lost World.

Typical quote: "I've discovered that I've got this preoccupation with ordinary people pursued by large forces."

- Andy Lowe





A BRIEF HISTORY OF BULLET TIME

...and a look at its future as *The Matrix*'s VFX gurus gear up to re-invent the movie's mind-bending effects for the sequels...

"Virtual cinematography is the

beginning of God's-eve control for

the audience. It's the obvious next

destination for entertainment."

- John Gaeta, visual effects supervisor, The Matrix

t was beyond a doubt the decade's most amazing-looking movie – but have *The Matrix*'s incredible effects, which allowed Keanu Reeves to kick the crap out of his opponents in super slo-mo as a camera danced, seemingly impossibly, around the action, already gotten stale?

It's a question that the movie's Visual Effects Supervisor John Gaeta and Bullet Time Supervisor Kim Libreri have thought about a lot – especially as they've seen their creation imitated (but never duplicated) in commercials and music videos or parodied in *Deuce Bigalow*, *Scary Movie* and on the MTV Movie Awards.

Although those highspeed ballets were originally dubbed "Bullet Time." the FX gurus now beg to differ. "Bullet Time is a term created by the Wachowski brothers in their script for *The Matrix* to describe a conceptual state where Neo obtains a mind-

over-Matrix capability," explains Gaeta, who's now following up his Oscar-winning turn on *The Matrix* with two back-to-back sequels. "It's a concept as opposed to a technique."

To depict Bullet Time, Gaeta and his colleagues at Manex Visual Effects devised an array of 120 still cameras, firing in sequence to simulate a single camera encircling the actors as they spiraled through the air against a green-screen backdrop. To combine this with a real-world background, Gaeta's team digitally re-created the environment where the stunts would occur, then applied the same hyperbolic camera move. The result – the illusion of a hyper-speed moving camera shooting upward of 600 frames per second while keeping its subjects perfectly framed, impossible to achieve with a real camera – was mindbending. "What we really did is build a faster camera than had ever been built before, which could move incredible distances at the speed of sound, maybe even at the speed of light!" says Libreri.

"It's called 'virtual cinematography,'" adds Gaeta, "the ability to separate a camera's time and space from that of its subject. It doesn't necessarily pertain to a frozen or a slow-motion moment. That's why we often get frustrated when we get lumped into frozen-time categories."

Call them what you will, *The Matrix*'s stunning battles are in danger of going the way of the "morph" – another onceastounding technique whose impact rapidly diminished as it became more commonplace. Exactly how Gaeta plans to keep *The Matrix* sequels fresh is under wraps for now. "All I can say is that the process will be completely different," he says. "The technologies we used on *The Matrix* are now four years old, so we're swapping techniques on a monthly basis in pursuit of more efficient ways of separately controlling camera and subject to make the effects more holistic."

But unlike the morph, Gaeta sees a genre beginning

rather than a gimmick ending. "Virtual cinematography is a gateway toward interactive content, or virtual reality, and it's absolutely on the horizon. The viewer will be able to select the vantage point in a sporting event, a historical event, even after videotaping their children

playing. Virtual cinematography is the beginning of God's-eye control for the audience. It's the obvious next destination for entertainment." Libreri likens the experience to that scene in *Blade Runner* where Deckard uses a machine to explore a still photograph – "The only difference is that we'll be able to do that in real time with moving images." But virtual cinematography may have a downside: it might just open the door to the kind of technology that eventually shafted humanity in *The Matrix*. "The Matrix's power comes from its ability to plug human beings into a simulation so real, we can't tell the difference between it and reality." Libreri says. "Unfortunately, to make the movie, we had to deploy those same techniques."

In fact, the military applications are already being explored; the US Army is using *Matrix*-like techniques for possible wargaming sims. "The irony is that *The Matrix* describes a future in which machines, most likely originated at the military, get out of control," Gaeta says. "The Department of Defense has referenced *Matrix* themes to describe what they intend to build. So we find ourselves somewhere between fact and fiction at the moment."

- Ron Magid

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RUMOR CONTROL COMIS ATTRA

Pssssst... did you hear? Solid-gold scuttlebutt direct from Patrick Sauriol of Coming Attractions, the Internet's most reliable movie gossip source.

THERE ARE TWO MORE SPOONS: What's shaking with those two sequels to The Matrix? Well, the scripts are still being written - so those rumors about Trinity being a double agent working for the Als, or Neo having a showdown with an anti-Neo, are still just rumors, at least for the moment. Word out of Sydney is that the brothers Wachowski might not have the studio space they need next summer, when filming is supposed to begin on the back-to-back projects, and they might have to film in England or Canada instead. But it looks like the presumed-deceased Agent Smith is coming back, proving once again that nothing protects you better than having a backup copy.



I'M SORRY DAVE, I'M AFRAID I CAN'T DO A SEQUEL: Arthur C. Clarke has written four books in the 2001: A Space Odyssey universe, two of which have been made into movies. Recently a rumor sprung up that MGM had plans to turn the final novel, 3001, into a film. Uh-uh, says Clarke's publisher Del Rey. But Morgan Freeman's production company, Revelations Entertainment, is still planning on adapting another Clarke book, Rendezvous

With Rama. French artist Moebius has been tapped to provide conceptual drawings and writer Scott Brick has turned in a solid screenplay, with David Fincher attached to direct.

HAVE LIGHTSABER, WILL TRAVEL: By the time you read this, Star Wars Episode II should have wrapped up filming in Australia. The production now moves to Italy and Tunisia, reprising the film's locations of Naboo and Tatooine. Security's been as tight as an Ewok's butt on the Fox Studios lot in Sydney, but not tight enough to stop me getting my hands on this tidbit of gossip, direct from a Stormtrooper down under: massive lightsaber battles are coming (in the rain, no less), and a traitor will be revealed in May 2002.



MAYBE THE BATSIGNAL'S LIGHT IS BROKEN?:

Hey, remember this big superhero action franchise Warner Bros. used to have called Batman? Sure, I'm still in therapy because of the psychological damage Batman and Robin inflicted on me, but now it looks like WB wants to heal the wounds. There's been quiet development on a fifth Batman film over the past couple of years; nothing solid, just small talk and feelers to see who might be interested in rejuvenating Gotham

City. Currently the lucky/unlucky bastard in line to direct appears to be Darren Aronofsky, director of 1998's Pi. Darren, I'm behind you - just no bat-nipples this time, OK?

NO PICTURES, PLEASE!: Nestled on the Warner Bros. lot in Burbank are the closed soundstages containing the sets to Steven Spielberg's next movie, A.I. Based upon a short story called Supertoys Last All Summer Long by Brian Aldriss, and at one time set to be directed by Stanley Kubrick, we know very little except that it's set during a time when the world's oceans have flooded due to the Greenhouse Effect. Therefore that cylindrical. art deco-ish, quasi-futuristic building surrounded by a deep pool of water inside Stage 16 must prominently figure into the storyline, right? And the algae-encrusted typewriter sitting outside the soundstage? Just neat window dressing, I suppose?

> HULK SMASHI: Universal would like nothing better than to get The Hulk out of development hell and into theaters. Rumor has it the studio's spent about \$20 million on making a believable 9-to-12-foot computergenerated Hulk, and they don't want all that techno-trickery to go to waste. That's why they sought out solid screenwriters like Michael France (GoldenEye) and Michael Tolkin (The Player), hoping to bring a level of hard-edge action and realism to the green Goliath. Latest rumor is that the current script has the not-so-jolly green giant rampaging on the Las Vegas strip. Hey, I'd pay \$10 to see that.

WHAT'S A FORD TO DO?: Harrison Ford's been making noises that he wants to do another Indiana Jones movie, but when's it going to happen? Ford's been mulling potential projects lately; he dropped out of Steven Soderbergh's Traffic and rejected the latest Jack Ryan script. and he's been courted by Touchstone to play the younger and older assassin roles in the sci-fi/action project Gemini. If the rumors that M. Night Shyamalan (The Sixth Sense) could be writing a new Indy script before the end of the year prove true, could that be enough to finally put Ford over the top?

MAYBE THIS TIME SHE'LL REMEMBER TO WEAR 'EM: Sharon Stone's already signed to reprise her icepick-wielding Basic Instinct femme fatale Catherine Tramell in the sequel to 1992's kinky thriller. This time Catherine's playing mind games with her psychotherapist, who of course decides to engage in some offhours practices with our friendly neighborhood nympho. Yeah, but is this a good or bad thing? The best-known script reviewer on the Internet, an enigmatic fellow known as Stax, read the B12 screenplay and thought it wasn't bad, even if it does tread on familiar ground. Check out his review at http://filmforce.ign.com/news/1117.html while you're waiting for the movie to appear in either late 2001 or early 2002.

HOBBITS FOR THE HOLIDAYS: Peter Jackson's epic The Lord of the Rings movies are shaping up to be cinematic juggernauts - and the first installment is still more than a year away! With millions of downloads on the official website (www.lordoftherings.net) for the preview film and smuggled pictures leaked onto the Net (www.theonering.net), we're talking Episode I-level fever here. It's already known that Jackson has made some alterations from the novels, but nothing too major has been modified. Now the latest word, out of Ain't It Cool News (www.aint-it-cool.com) is we'll get to see our first trailer in front of Kevin Costner's upcoming thriller Thirteen Days, opening on December 20.



DOUBLE-EDGED BLADE: Production on Blade 2: Bloodhunt kicks off this fall under director Guillermo del Toro's watchful eye. The script's by David Gover, who wrote the original, and picks up a year after the first film. Seems Death isn't stopping Kris Kristofferson's character, Whistler, from coming back; don't worry, it all makes sense. New characters include Scud, one of Blade's new teammates; Novak, a new kind of bloodsucker called

a "Reaper"; and Nyssa, the female leader of a group of vampires Blade is forced to ally with. But can it possibly match the gruesome greatness of the original? The smart money (i.e., mine) is on Blade 2 being a more-than-worthy sequel.

CLIVE BARKER WATCH: The British horror author hasn't had a film based on his work since 1995's Lord of Illusions. After serving as executive producer on Bill Condon's Gods and Monsters in 1998, Barker's signed a pricey deal with Disney to create a fantasy franchise insiders call The Abarat Quartet, kind of like Imajica meets Harry Potter, due out in a few years. Meanwhile, the script for a movie based on Barker's short story collections Books of Blood has been completed, utilizing three stories tied together with a framework story written by Condon.



THE FRANCHISE HAS SURVIVED: So, they're making Jurassic Park III. Oh come on, like it's a surprise? Universal's pulling together the strings for director Joe "Jumanji" Johnston's se-sequel, set to begin filming soon. The script is Craig Rosenberg's first Hollywood production, and it's being kept under lock and key inside Universal. We know Sam Neill's back as Dr. Alan Grant, and there are reports he might be joined by Jeff Goldblum or Laura Dern,

but no one knows for sure. However, you'll know more when the teaser trailer for IP3 is released on the special edition DVDs for The Lost World and Jurassic Park on October 10.

STAR TREK NEXT: So the cat's out of the bag that the next Star Trek flick is being written by John Logan, who polished Gladiator and wrote the TV movie RKO-281. Logan's been a lifelong Trek fan and says he wants to bring something fresh to the franchise (which, let's be honest, really does need a major tune-up). With rumors swirling that Logan's writing a death scene for a major character (can you hear "Data"?), the return of an old foe to challenge Picard and crew, and the fact that 10 is an even number (everyone knows that odd-numbered Trek movies suck), maybe we'll be treated to a decent Trek this time. Maybe

Reporting by Patrick Sauriol. For the most up-to-date movie news and rumors, check out Coming Attractions at www.corona.bc.ca.

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In the heart of suburbia man with heart has just moved in

TOMB TO TANGO

Angelina Jolie steps into the boots of gamedom's greatest heroine for Paramount's Summer 2001 biggie...

eeks rejoice: cutting through an ocean of fan-fueled rumors and numerous delays, Paramount has finally started shooting Tomb Raider, the big-screen adaptation of the multi-million-selling videogame, with plans to roll it out next summer. And the biggest barricade to production has just been hurdled: the casting of Angelina Jolie as grave-robbing (and bra-busting) archeologist Lara Croft.

The movie's certainly taken its sweet time getting to the screen. Paramount picked up the rights from game publisher Eidos back in 1997 and hired producer Lawrence Gordon (Die Hard, Event Horizon) to put the project together. Writers Brent Friedman and Steve DeSouza (no strangers to videogame adaptations with Mortal Kombat Annihilation and Street Fighter under their respective belts) both took abortive cracks at the script, and Bill & Ted director Steven Herek was briefly rumored to direct before Simon West (Con Air) stepped up to the plate.

The biggest hassle, however - and the most succulent grist for the rumor-mill - has been the casting of the lead. The Tomb Raider games became multimedia blockbusters mainly thanks to their plucky avatar Lara Croft, a tough, agile and somewhat impossibly chested English archeologist whose not-so-subtle charms have made her a virtual icon all over the world. So, who to cast in this pivotal role? The online Tomb Raider shrines have been buzzing with fanboy speculation ever since the movie was announced, with everyone from Liz Hurley to Demi Moore supposedly in the frame at some point or another - but the geeks were unanimous in their applause when Angelina Jolie was officially announced.

Jolie has already been in England filming the movie, and while there she took time out to chat with our pals at IGN Movies (www.ign.com). "I'm doing so much in this film," she says. "There's a part of me that

just thinks, God, that's insane, I can't believe I'm doing this! And there's another part of me - when I'm in full army gear, and some guy's going, 'Advance! Advance! Duck! Roll!' - and I'm like, maybe this is me. And it kinda is. I've been doing bungee ballet. diving, weapons training with Special Forces, kickboxing... everything from soccer to rowing to things that are British. They're sending me to manners school! Lara's very British. But she was raised a certain way, she was raised really proper."

For regular updates on the movie's production, rumors and other news, check out The Croft Times (www.ctimes.net), a Portugese-run fansite that's probably the most rabid of all the online Lara shrines.

- Gary Whitta



Lara: every game boy's bigbreasted, grave-robbing fantasy girl.

SURVIVING THE GAME

Tomb Raider has its work cut out for it if it's to break a long-standing trend of movies based on videogames being almost universally garbage. A whistle-stop history lesson...



SUPER MARIO BROTHERS (1993)

Nintendo must have had naked pictures of Bob Hoskins, John Leguizamo and Dennis Hopper or something - how else could they have convinced three otherwise respectable actors to star in this brainless clunker which (a) was crap and (b) bore almost no resemblance to the videogame whatsoever. Co-directors Rocky Morton and Annabel Jankel (D.O.A., Max Headroom) were never heard from again.

DOUBLE DRAGON

Based on the hit Tecmo arcade game about two kung-fu fightin' brothers, this fecal adaptation sucked in the talents of a pre-Party of Five Scott Wolf. Alyssa Milano was the babe, and T2s Robert Patrick (now back in the limelight as Agent Scully's new partner) was the

amulet-craving baddie with a shockingly bad blond 'do. Eminently forgettable.

STREET FIGHTER (1994)

Die Hard scribe Steven DeSouza "wrote" and 'directed" this abominable adaptation of what was, at the time, the world's most successful martial-arts fighting game. Jean-Claude Van Damme took the lead as Colonel Guile, a role most memorable for his rousing "I am going to kick Bison's ass - now who wants to go home, and who wants to go with ME?" speech, and for providing a tragically ignominious cap to Raul Julia's otherwise quality career - his turn as the improbablynamed warlord M. Bison was to be his last.

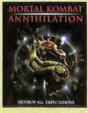


MORTAL KOMBAT (1995)

Remarkable for being the only videogamemovie to ever achieve actual financial success (despite having Christopher Lambert in the lead), Mortal Kombat was, like the videogame, a frantic flurry of furious fists and far-out fantasy - way too fast and loud for most adults, but the kids lapped it up. Directed by Paul Anderson - no, not the good one, the one who did Event Horizon and Soldier.



John Leonetti (Detroit Rock City) took the helm for this inevitable sequel, where once again it's up to a plucky band of martial artists to save Earth from an army of pan-dimensional kung-fu invaders. No Christopher Lambert this time, but - guess what? - it didn't matter.



WING COMMANDER (1999)

This big-screen adaptation of the popular series of deep-space dogfighting simulations was directed by the games' original creator Chris Roberts - proving that it's best to stick with what you know,



and that it is possible for a Freddie Prinze, Jr. movie to bomb, so long as it sucks hard enough.

Jolie: polishing up her English

accent as we speak

AND STILL TO COME... (MAYBE)

The likes of Steve Buscemi, Alec Baldwin, Donald Sutherland and Ving Rhames have lent their voice

talents to this outrageously ambitious computer-animated epic based on the blockbusting series of roleplaying adventures (now in its tenth installment). Due out sometime in 2001, early word is that the visuals are mind-blowing

Mortal Kombat moviemaker Threshold Entertainment has the big-screen rights to this babe-lovin', alien-bashing, trash-talkin' vidgame hero, and the project is currently in script stage. Everyone from Howie Long to Jim Carrey has been mentioned in connection with the lead role, but no one has been cast yet.

RESIDENT EVIL

This one's been languishing in development hell forever. Capcom's zombie-infested "survival horror" videogames continue to break sales records, but the movie just can't get off the ground. Zombiemeister George A. Romero was briefly attached to write and direct, and Spawn screenwriter Alan McElroy also took a crack at the script, but neither is involved any more. Jason Patric and Samantha Mathis had been rumored to star, but that too has since petered out. Don't hold your breath for this one.



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RoughCut

SHORT CUTS

Tasty bite-size news nuggets from the latest mumblings and rumblings in Tinseltown...



By far the greatest news in this entire issue is the fact that 20th Century Fox is currently producing a movie called *Dude, Where's My Car?*. Clearly, any movie with a name like that must turn out to be one of the greatest films of all time. In this *Road Trip*-style comedy we'll follow the adventures of a bunch of brain-dead college guys as they try to figure out where they left their car after a night of partying. Awesome! **Seann William Scott** (the *really* stupid one from *Road Trip*) will star alongside Kristy "the original Buffy" Swanson, with TV director **Danny Leiner** (*Freaks and Geeks, Sports Night*) making his feature debut. On hearing this news, 2001 cannot arrive fast enough for us.

Ever seen MediaTrip.com's web cartoon *Lil' Pimp*, about a nine year-old hustler with a full posse of ho's and a pet ferret with Tourette's Syndrome? If so, chances are you're a fan and you'll be psyched to hear that the toon is all set to make its feature-length theatrical debut. Creators Mark Brooks and Peter Gilstrap will write, direct and produce the 80-minute flick, which, like *South Park*, will not be going high-tech for its big-screen debut – it'll use the same Macromedia Flash technology currently used by the web show. Look for it next year.

So, David Koepp sells his original screenplay, *The Panic Room*, to Columbia Pictures for a record-busting, multi-million-dollar sum. The thriller, about a mother and daughter defending their New York house from two desperate thieves, is said to be killer. Okay, so now what? Well, now the project's moving forward with David Fincher (*Fight Club*) in talks to direct, while Sandra Bullock is on board in the lead role with Forest Whitaker and Dwight Yoakam currently in talks to play the thieves. This one's a potential 2001 biggie...



Arnold Schwarzenegger has given apocalyptic-future fans a boost by announcing he will once again don the metal endoskeleton for a third *Terminator* movie. But without James Cameron writing or directing, is it even worth it? Maybe – Roland Emmerich, David Fincher (yes, him again) and Ridley Scott have all been rumored to replace him, and the latest rumor is that Arnie will be battling a futuristic "Terminatrix" this time out, which you've gotta admit sounds pretty cool.

You think Hollywood might have learned something from *Hook*, but Columbia Pictures is pressing ahead with a big-budget (how does \$100 million grab you?), live-action version of *Peter Pan*. The project's been in on-and-off development for 20 (count 'em) years, but now looks like it's finally going to happen with **Michael Goldenberg** (*Contact*) re-working the script and **PJ Hogan**, who directed, um, *My Best Friend's Wedding*, in talks to direct. Wake us up when it's over...

Jet Li looks set to follow in the foosteps of Bruce Lee by starring as Kato in a bigscreen adaptation of the classic TV series *The Green Hornet*. That's if he doesn't decide to take up an offer to appear in *The Matrix 2* first...

After a spell writing *Daredevil* comics and a draft of the *Superman Lives* screenplay, **Kevin Smith** is now taking a crack at another of his childhood faves; he's been signed by Miramax to write and direct a new *Fletch* movie. Yes, you read that right. *Fletch Won* will be a prequel to the earlier two films, with a younger actor (possibly Smith-lites **Ben Affleck** or **Jason Lee**) reprising

the role made famous by **Chevy Chase**, with Chase himself being offered a cameo. Smith has one more, as-yet-unnamed project to direct first, so don't expect anything until at least 2001. But this, we've gotta see.

Speaking of Affleck, the chinful star is rumored to be the latest actor to take on the role of Tom Clancy's all-American hero Jack Ryan in the movie adaptation of Clancy's The Sum of All Fears. After Alec Baldwin and Harrison Ford, that makes three different Ryans over the course of four films – we haven't seen that kind of turnover since Batman!

Philip Noyce, who directed the last two Ryanfests, will return in the director's chair, and it'll be interesting to see what he does with the book's not-exactly-feel-good ending, in which the Super Bowl gets blown up by a terrorist nuke.

Ridley Scott managed to inadvertently piss off sci-fi fans the world over by ending years of speculation about one of his most famous films. He revealed in a recent British TV documentary about Blade Runner that Deckard is a replicant. Some hardcore fans are fuming about this little bubble finally being officially burst, but we always thought it was pretty obvious if you just paid attention to the Director's Cut...





Latest casting news on *Star Wars Episode II* is that aging horrormeister **Christopher Lee** is to appear as a "charismatic separatist" (thereby sewing up a neat fantasy double whammy after his just-wrapped turn as Saruman in New Line's epic *The Lord of the Rings*), and **Jimmy Smits** will star as Bail Organa – although it's unlikely he'll be dropping trou, *NYPD Blue*-style.

Watch Jurassic Park in the park.

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RoughCut

CINEMULLETS

Ever since its unholy inception, the mullet has enjoyed a powerful presence in the movies. Here, TOTAL MOVIE combs through Hollywood's ignominious relationship with the world's worst haircut. Why? Because we can.

all it what you will - the guido, hockey hair, the safety cut, a cross sectional of nicely cut grass and its roots - the tradition of the short-on-top-long-in-back haircut, most commonly referred to as the mullet. has been one of comedy and tragedy.

The mullet craze has long played out on film, most recently in Marky Wahlberg's latest butt-rocker homage, Metal God. The mullet is no longer just a snicker-behind-your-back haircut. Nowadays, when a director (or a magazine editor) finds his production to be short on laughs, he throws in a mullet or two. Voila! Instant yuks!



GUMMO MULLETHEAD: Eddie, the tennis player

"He got a haircut. He looks pretty." Not only was he the apple of Chloe Sevigny's eye. Eddie gets our vote for one of cinema's flyest mullets. Check out the stepped sidewalls (a development in mullet

technology that found popularity with the Church of Latter-Day Anthrax; see also Vanilla Ice's right eyebrow). Look at the dance. This kid has got a future. He's got that ADD which gives this surly competitor the "psycho"-logical edge and a daily Ritalin dose gives him the focus to hit balls 65mph. When your 'do helps your game and your balls, you're destined to be a winner.



THE STAR WARS TRILOGY MULLETHEAD: Chewbacca

Proud bearer of the title "galaxy's oldest-living mullet," this 200-year-old Wookiee is known for being strong, fearless, and a great starship mechanic, but too

often do his pioneering locks go uncredited. Well. not any more. Truly, Chewie's mullet redefines versatility. When at work, he sports the Dio look. When he goes out to scam with Han and co. and has time to primp, he rocks the Don Dokken. His styles are robust, too – even when jungle-swinging onto the roof of an Imperial Scout Walker like a big furry Tarzan, there's nary a hair out of place. Chewie, we salute you.



WAYNE'S WORLD MULLETHEADS: Wayne and Garth

Talk about postmodernism – these guys were well aware that they were mulletheads. And at the end of the day. Mike Myers and Dana Carvey could pat each other on

the back, put their lobsters on dummy heads, and laugh about the people they were making fun of. Some of us at the time (and we won't name any names) didn't have the luxury to put our hair on a Styrofoam wigholder, but we still laughed because in an absurd kind of way the depiction was right on the money. We mark this as the beginning of the end for rocker mullets. After all, who in their right mind would want to sport one after seeing this movie?



CLERKS MULLETHEAD: Entire state of New Jersey

The Garden State is notorious for mulletheads. The difference is, when they do it back East, it's actually considered macho. Laugh at a guy with a mullet in Jersey and he'll kick your ass. West Coast mullets are rightly considered wimps by

comparison – they do it merely to look pretty and would no doubt be reduced to a quivering wreck if an argument in a bar turned ugly (maybe that's why this species is close to extinction). The message is clear – don't mess with Jersey mulletheads. They're so hard-core, some of them have even got tattoos dedicated to their 'dos. Really, it's true.



ANY 1980s PATRICK SWAYZE MOVIE KING MULLETHEAD: Patrick Swayze

Pat set a historic precedent when he (most likely) inserted the Mullet Clause into his movie contracts. The clause went something like this: "Take this mullet or I don't dance dirty," And

thus are movie legends made. Have you actually seen *Roadhouse*? Good God! It all begs the question, why does Swayze insist on sporting the squirrel pelt? Answer: Because it goes so fabulously well with his shoes. **SIDE NOTE:** Taking a leaf out of Patrick's book, Kurt Russell (most likely) had the Mullet Clause inserted into his contract for his ill-fated boat-bound "comedy" *Overboard*, proving that not everyone can get away with it.



THIS IS SPINAL TAP MULLETHEADS: Spinal Tap

Okay, so these mullets wouldn't pass military muster, but they still rank high on our list. Arguably, they fall in the same self-referential category as the Wayne's World mullets, but in our opinion, those sported by St Hubbins,

Tufnel and co. are much better. Why? Two reasons. First off, these guys used their *real hair* not lame fake extensions. Method mullets are cool. Second, it's *This is Spinal Tap.* Need we say more?



RAMBO: FIRST BLOOD PART II

MULLETHEAD: John Rambo Remember that awesome premission sequence? He straps on the knife. He slings bullets

on the knife. He slings bullets across his chest. And then, the final touch – he ties off his mullet with a red bandana. John Rambo, mullethead marine, reporting for duty, sir!

Stallone's mullet earned worldwide notoriety despite his best efforts to hide it behind that bandanna and within a pile of curls. Truly, the Rambo mullet is unique. That is, it was unique... until Kip Winger came along.



BOOGIE NIGHTS MULLETHEAD: Little Bill

Interestingly, Boogie Nights spanned two crucial mullet eras, the '70s and the '80s. The '70s mullets were all about, "Am I a hippie? Am I disco? Pass the coke, I think I'm Bowie." In the '80s the mullet M.O. became "Well, yeah, I'm metal, but I'm

fancy metal." Full credit, then, goes to William H. Macy's Little Bill for standing out in one of the greatest ensemble mullet movies ever made. If we had hair that bad, we'd blow our brains out, too.

SIDE NOTE: The soundtrack album is a monument to mulletdom in itself, featuring such hirsute heroes as Rick Springfield, ELO, Night Ranger, Dirk Diggler...



THE MAD MAX TRILOGY

MULLETHEADS: Max Rockatansky and co.

If Mel Gibson is right, mullets are like cockroaches – one of the few things to survive after a nuclear apocalypse. Proudly they thrive in all three Mad Max movies. Was Mel trying to

say that no matter how bleak the future may be, at least "the cut" will remain? Or merely that ugly times breed ugly hair? Not sure. One thing is for sure, everybody would have been better off without the ape drape.

SIDE NOTE: Seems that Mel believes the mullet to be a good character builder. He's also sported the bi-level to get into his role as Martin Riggs, the muzzle-sucking cop from Lethal Weapon, and as William Wallace, Scotsman extraordinaire in Braveheart.

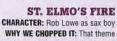
- Kevin P. Smith

MULLETS THAT DIDN'T MAKE THE CUT



JUNGLE 2 JUNGLE

CHARACTER: Mimi Siku, Tim Allen's long-lost tribal son WHY WE CHOPPED IT: Tim Allen movies suck.





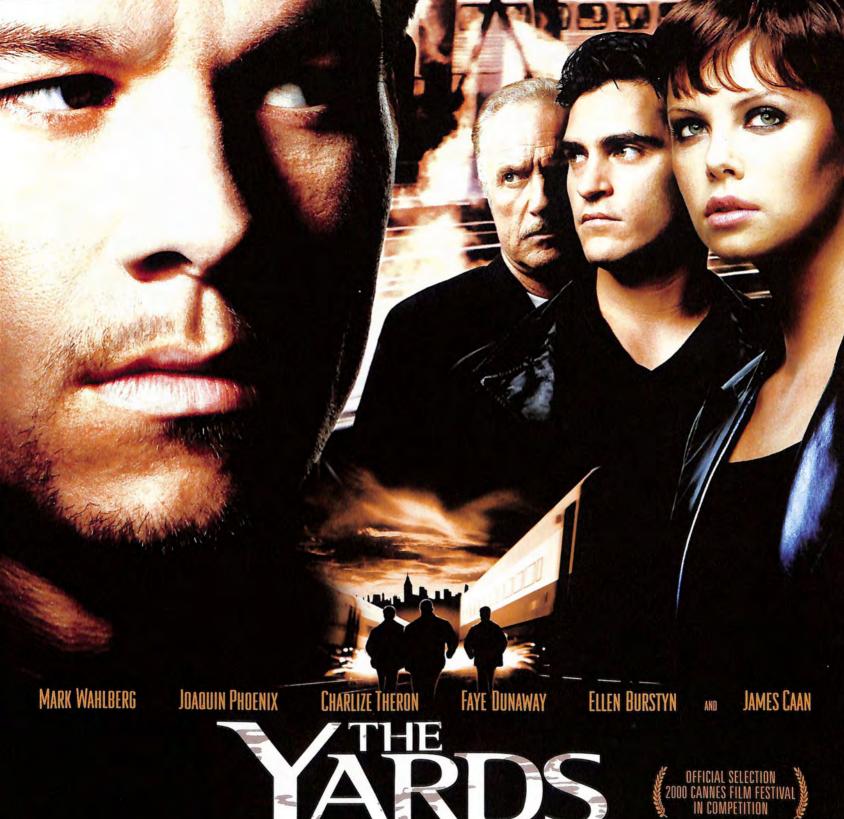
song is just so damn annoying, and it only gets worse when Lowe pretends to blow it out his sax.



VAMPIRE IN BROOKLYN

CHARACTER: Eddie Murphy as Maximillian WHY WE CHOPPED IT: For a while there, at some point post-Delirious, Eddie lost it. Murphy historians looking to propoint the exact moment in time when this happened need look no further than his shocking hair "style" sported here.

THERE'S NOTHING MORE DANGEROUS THAN AN INNOCENT MAN.





EPISODE II: THE BIG RISK

Before a frame of footage has been seen, before it's even been given its official moniker (*Return of the Jar-Jar*, anyone?), *Star Wars Episode II* is already creating controversy. No, it's not the NAACP or the ACLU whining about more alleged racial stereotypes – this time it's filmmakers and cinephiles who are up in arms.

Why? Because George Lucas, ever the pioneer, has decided to give good old-fashioned celluloid the boot and shoot *Episode II* entirely on new-fangled digital videotape. While film is a known quantity, digital is – well, people who know about this kind of thing find it hard to believe that anything shot on tape can look as good as film, especially when projected onto a huge movie screen.

Difference here is, the new *Star Wars* movies use an unprecedented amount of digital SFX – something in virtually every shot, in fact – so *Episode II* Producer Rick McCallum argues that the switch to all-digital photography makes perfect sense. "We work in a world that doesn't exist," he tells TOTAL MOVIE. "Everything has to be created: every prop, every piece of dressing, every vehicle, the worlds themselves. We're in the digital realm no matter how you look at it, so for us not to be acquiring images digitally is just ludicrous."

Fans and industry veterans are skeptical, but would Lucas really take that kind of risk with the most successful series in film? "It's a risk because it's the unknown," McCallum says, "but this is no different than when color was introduced; it's not even as big a deal as that. That's how confident everybody feels about it."

To get the look he wants, Lucas has spearheaded the creation of a new widescreen digital cinematography system, using a Sony HDW-F900 camera modified by Panavision to accept an extensive range of accessories, including Panavision's new digital lenses. Lucas and McCallum say that, using this equipment, they'll achieve a look equal to any previous *Star Wars* movie. "This is only the first step," McCallum says. "It's not the perfect solution, but right now we feel happy that the high-definition image we'll scan out to film for release is just as bad as film." You heard that right: "just as bad." So does McCallum believe digital resolution ultimately will be *superior* to film? "There's absolutely no question," he says.

But in the meantime, a few words of caution from Jim O'Keeffe, one of four cameramen on Mike Figgis' recent *Time Code*, the first-ever movie to be shot entirely digitally. "Don't buy all the hoopla that all these people are putting out," O'Keeffe cautions, "because digital's got a

"It's a risk because it's the unknown, but this is no different than when color was introduced."

- Rick McCallum, producer, Star Wars Episode II

long way to go. Film has been developed always with this very high-end approach, while video started as a documentary news-gathering medium, so it does have limitations."

Cinematographers also argue that Lucas's digital gear isn't rugged enough to withstand shooting under the desert conditions needed for locations like Tatooine. But, McCallum quips, "That's total bullshit. Our new cameras use basically the same body as the digital Beta-cam, which we have been working with for almost four years. We've had that thing in rain, snow, water, everything, and it's never failed us."

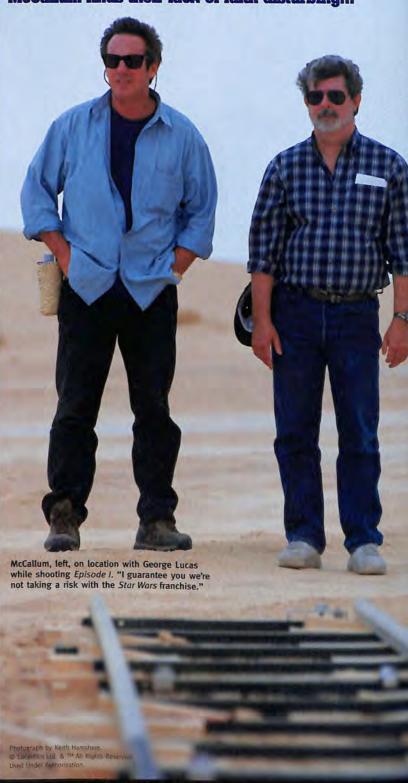
Although digital is attractive to Lucas because of the vast numbers of digital effects, the current Sony-Panavision equipment presents one major obstacle to shooting effects digitally: camera speed. The cameras Lucas will use shoot at 24 frames per second, but many effects, such as explosions and model shots, demand high-speed photography, often hundreds of frames per second. So what's a Jedi Master to do? "We will be shooting some shots on film, mostly anything that has high-speed camera work," McCallum admits, confirming industry scuttlebutt that Lucas would bring along film cameras for insurance. "We'll have our Vistavision cameras from ILM, since George likes to be able to shoot the full Vistavision frame, then change the composition in post-production."

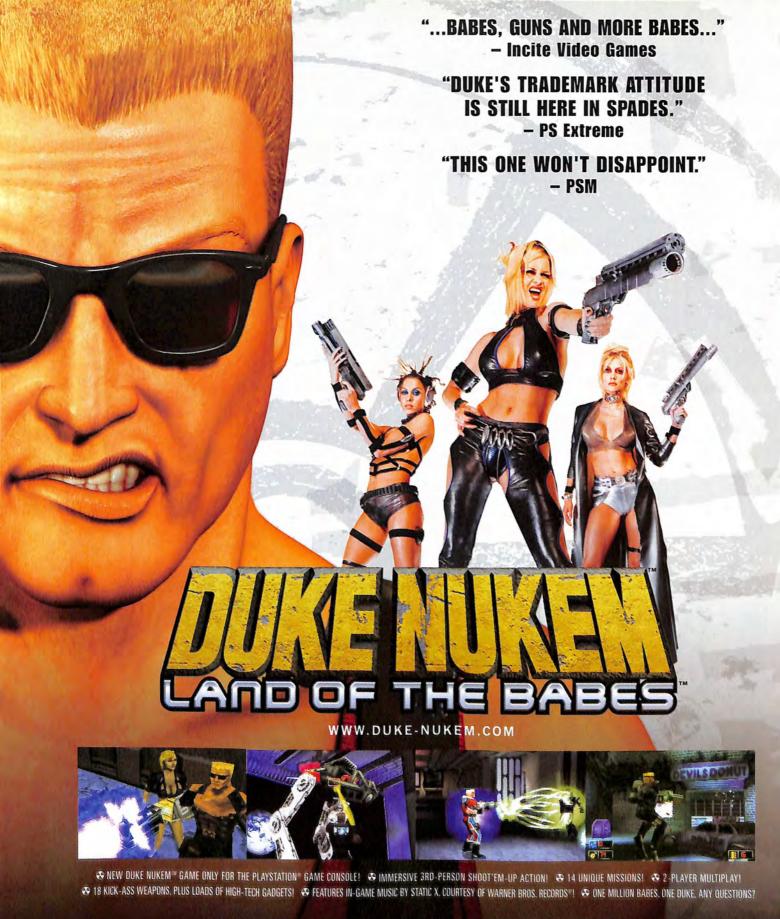
But doesn't shooting background plates on film mitigate against the argument for digital cinematography? "No, no," McCallum stresses. "We're actually going to be mixing and combining a lot of stuff, just as we did on *Episode I*, only it's reversed. While *The Phantom Menace* was primarily shot on film with a small percentage of high-def, now it's primarily high-def with a very small percentage of film. It'll be 98% high-def, and maybe 2% film."

McCallum goes on to remind the naysayers that there are several minutes worth of digital footage in *Episode I*, shot with a high-definition camera not nearly as good as the custom-designed equipment Lucas will use to shoot *Episode II*. "They're full shots and no one noticed," McCallum says. "I guarantee you we're not taking a risk with the *Star Wars* franchise."

- Ron Magid

Is George Lucas rolling the dice with Star Wars
Episode II by shooting it all on digital videotape?
Some fans and critics think so, but producer Rick
McCallum finds their lack of faith disturbing...















Animated Violence Animated Blood and Gore Strong Sexual Context

RAGING BENDER

Futurama's trash-talkin' cyborg rates Hollywood history's greatest robots. Better leave now before it gets ugly.

R scantily-clad babes and submarines, there's only one other thing that virtually guarantees a good flick, and that's an ass-kickin' cyborg. Hollywood history is rife with classic robot killas, and who better to judge their mechanical machismo than the toughest, drunkest robot on TV – *Futurama*'s Bender. Take it away, big guy...



MARIA (Metropolis)

The first-ever movie robot (can you believe 1926?), this malignant cyber-bitch (an evil mechanical version of the film's heroine) lays down some serious destruction, inciting mass riots among the city's oppressed masses. She ends up burned at the stake, which you've gotta admit is a pretty unique demise for an evil robot.

BAD-ASS QUOTE: It's a silent movie, genius.

BENDER SAYS: "Maria is an inspiration. A true role model who opened doors for robots everywhere struggling to wreak havoc on humankind."

ROBBY (Forbidden Planet)

Bender:

a prince

among

robots

Doctor Morbius' right-hand droid from the 1956 classic, Robby is the quintessential movie robot, complete with whirling head thingies and impeccable manners, even when he's threatening to kick your ass. Went on to continued success on TV's Lost in Space, and still basking in retrochic; today, he's much in demand for personal appearances at corporate shindigs – check out www.the-robotman.com for rental rates and conditions. No, really.

BAD-ASS QUOTE: "My beams are focused on your blasters, gentlemen." **BENDER SAYS:** "We have a technical term for robots like him in the future – 'wussies.'"

ENFORCEMENT DROID SERIES 209 (RoboCop)

Quite possibly the baddest, most pants-wettingly fearsome robot ever to lumber onto the big screen. Boasting twin miniguns, a voice that

would give James Earl Jones an inferiority complex, and sampled lion roars for added intimidation, the ED-209 is all about overkill – literally. But it still can't

walk down stairs.

BAD-ASS QUOTE: "I am now authorized to use physical force."

BENDER SAYS: "I'd have to be crazy to make a wisecrack about my good friend ED-209, a

O

wonderful, friendly robot who would never unnecessarily blast me into hundreds of tiny pieces. Right, Ed? Right?"

ASH (Alien)

Mild-mannered science officer one minute, rolled-up magazine-wielding psycho the next. Proof, if any further proof were needed, that you just can't trust a movie robot. Ends up decapitated and vomiting that weird milky cyborg blood, but still manages to go out with a smile. Smug bastard.

BAD-ASS QUOTE: "I can't lie to you about your chances. But you have my sympathies."

BENDER SAYS: "Look, I can take my head off and no gooey milk comes out. Sheesh, that guy's such a drama queen."



CYBERDYNE SYSTEMS MODEL 101 (The Terminator, T2)

It can't be bargained with. It can't be reasoned with. And it absolutely will not... etc, etc. This mass-produced maniac is the most fashion-conscious robot in movie history, choosing only the baddest sunglasses and leather jackets – even if it does have to wax a few bikers to get them. Cyberdyne still needs to work on that voice chip, though – the T-101 almost sounds like it has some weird Austrian accept

BAD-ASS QUOTE: "Your clothes. Give them to me. Now."
BENDER SAYS: "'Your clothes, give them to me now' is a quote that only works if you're an invincible time-traveling robot, or if you're as handsome as I am "

GUNSLINGER (WestWorld)

"Come to Delos! Boy, have we got a vacation for YOU!" Yeah, if you consider being stalked across the desert by this merciless automaton a vacation. An evil reprise of his *Magnificent*

Seven hero, Yul Brynner's chrome-eyed

gunslinger never misses and never gives up – even after the battery in his six-shooter goes kaput and he gets acid splashed in his face. Like Maria before him, only a good robot barbecue can put this sucker on ice.

BAD-ASS QUOTE: "Boy spilled his drink. He needs his momma"

BENDER SAYS: "Do they make Rogaine for face loss?"



"We have a technical

term for robots

like him - wussies."

C-3PO & R2-D2 (The Star Wars trilogy)

We wouldn't bet a single Republic credit on the effeminate Threepio's chances in a no-holds-barred droid pitfight, but Artoo's a feisty little one when it's time to get busy. Not afraid to fight dirty with that little welding laser of his, he's taught many an Ewok the perils of dissing him. Respect.

BAD-ASS QUOTE: "His Excellency hopes that you will die honorably. But should any of you wish to beg for mercy, the great Jabba the Hutt will now listen to your pleas."

BENDER SAYS: "These two existed a long time ago in a galaxy far, far removed from any notions of masculinity."



THE IRON GIANT (The Iron Giant)

This towering megaweapon from interplanetary origins unknown proves that the bigger they are, the harder they hit you. Passive until an overzealous army general tries to throw down



some smack, our gentle giant suddenly becomes a death-dealing weapons platform complete with self-repairing capabilities. We want one.

BAD-ASS QUOTE: "I am not a gun!"
BENDER SAYS: "I admit it, I cried at the end.
I'm not made of wood, people! I guess when I
see that movie, I'm reminded of my little friend
that fits in my hand – beer."

HUEY, DEWEY AND LOUIE (Silent Running)

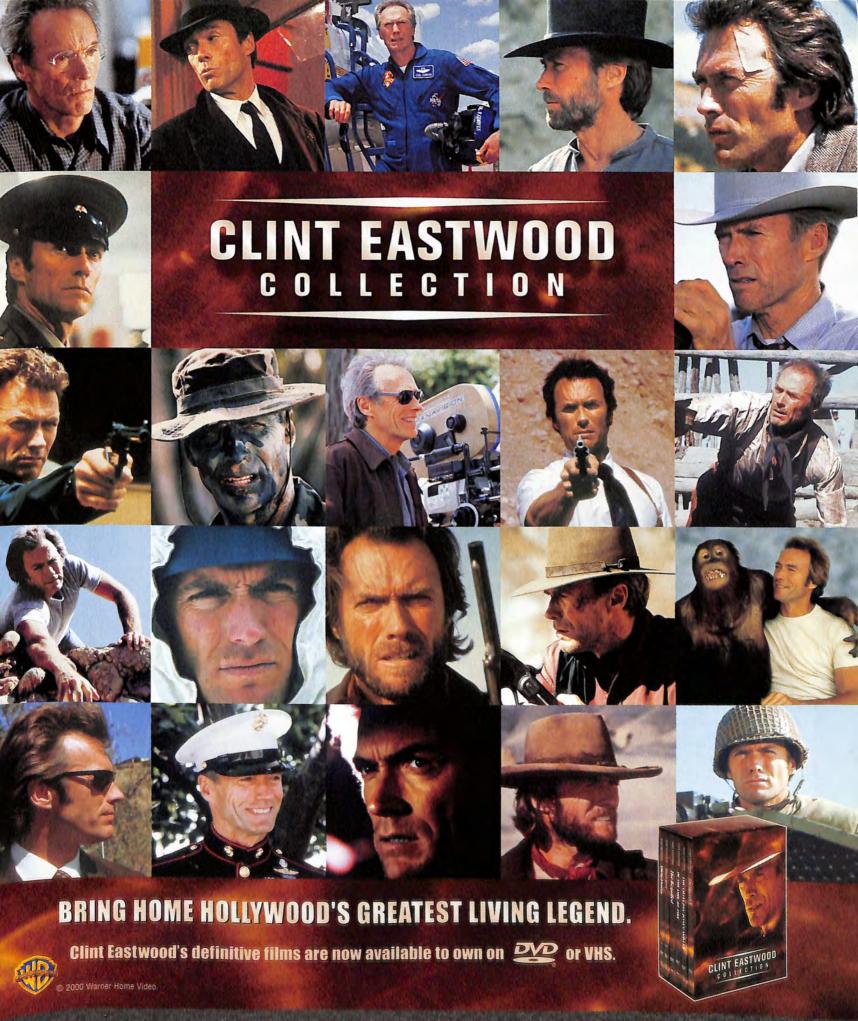
The three robots accompanying Bruce Dern in this 1971 mini-classic are bad-ass, um, gardening drones charged with maintaining what remains of Earth's vegetation under the domed roof of a deep-space ark. They may not seem dangerous, but trust us, if you're a weed

or an aphid, you do NOT want to see these bad boys trundling toward you...

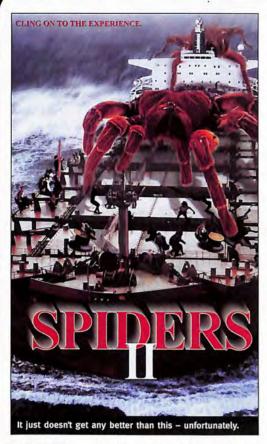
BAD-ASS QUOTE: Just kind of a sad warble.

BENDER SAYS: "What robot doesn't dream of a simple life tending a garden? *Every* robot except these three dorkbots."



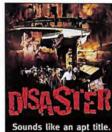


RoughCut











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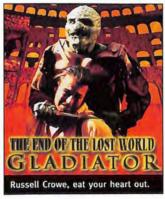
At the movie industry's biggest global supermarket, not everything is Grade-A, USDA choice meat...

o, you thought the Cannes Film Festival was all about glamorous megastars, trillion-dollar deals and multiple-award-winning films of quality, meaning and depth? Ha! Think again, pal.

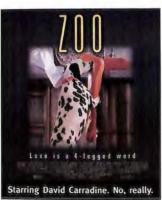
Beneath the glitzy surface of beautiful actresses, sexy supermodels and power players strutting along the tropical vistas of the Croisette, there's a sleazy underbelly that you won't see on *Entertainment Tonight* or the *CNN Hollywood Minute*. For what the average Joe doesn't realize is that Cannes is about much more than classy foreign films from around the world competing for the coveted Palm D'Or; it's also one of the global movie industry's premier places for, shall we say, less celebrated film-makers to hawk their wares to buyers hungry for new material.

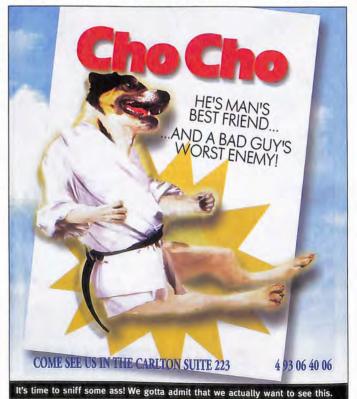
Anxious to seal distribution deals for movies not yet completed or, in many cases, not even in production yet, these Z-list movie companies flood Cannes with promotional flyers and posters designed to catch the eye and get distributors reaching for their checkbooks. The formula is somewhat predictable – a salacious, well-worn premise delivered on a low budget and with plenty of sex, violence, monsters and big-ass explosions. Sounds pretty good – until you see what that actually amounts to.

Returning exhausted and hung-over from this year's blow-out, our British counterparts at TOTAL FILM magazine brought back with them a sampling of some of the titles being promoted at the Festival's less-glamorous venues – skanky cinematic backstreets where sordid and degenerate movie executives can purchase virtually anything their perverted imaginations can conjure up, from karate-kicking canines and alien gladiators to giant spiders and octopi. So feast your eyes – and pray that the movies featured here are not coming to a theater near you soon...



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It's George Clooney as you've never seen him before in the Coen Brothers' best movie yet! PLUS: our ultimate guide to the Coens – everything you ever wanted to know about Fargo, The Big Lebowski, Raising Arizona, and more...



GO ON, PUNCH ME IN THE STOMACH

Can TOTAL MOVIE's intrepid correspondent survive an intensive three-day course in learning to be a fast-driving, karate-kicking, pistol-packing movie hero at Action Film Camp? Frankly, we doubt it.

"I LOST 75 POUNDS ON THE CAST AWAY DIET!"

Robert Zemeckis and Tom Hanks on the desert island movie that makes Survivor look like a walk in the park.

MINDLESS MOVIE MARATHON

What happens when you lock someone in their apartment and force them to watch Chuck Norris movies back-to-back for 48 hours? The answer is much worse than you think...



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□ 18 – 20 □ 25 – 29 □ 21 – 24 □ 30 – 34

□ 35 - 40 □ 41 - 44 □ 45 - 49 □ 50+

2. Sex:

□ Male □ Female

3. Marital Status:

☐ Single ☐ Married

☐ Separated/Divorced/Widowed

4. Education:

☐ High School Grad.

☐ Some College

☐ College Graduate

☐ Post Graduate

5. Employment Status:

□ Full Time □

☐ Part Time

☐ Full Time Student

□ Not Employed

☐ Retired

6. Job Title:

☐ Professional

☐ Executive/Managerial/Administrative

☐ Clerical/Sales/Technical ☐ Other

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□ \$150,000+

□ \$50,000 - \$54,999 □ \$55,000 - \$59,999 □ \$75,000 - \$100,000

8. Do you own a home?

☐ Yes

O No

9. Did you attend the movies in the last 6 months?

☐ Yes

□ No

10. How often did you attend movies in the past 90 days?

Once a week+

□ 2-3 times a month

Once a month

☐ Less than once a month

11. Do you attend movies?

Opening weekend

☐ After opening weekend

☐ After the second week

12. What types of movies do you prefer to see?

☐ Action☐ Comedy

☐ Drama
☐ Independent

□ Sci-Fi
□ Horror

☐ Yes

☐ Other

13. Do you own a DVD player?

17. Do you own a home entertainment center/theatre?
☐ Yes ☐ No

19. Do you own a surround-sound stereo system?

1 No

Yes

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□ 140

18. Do you own a big screen TV?

14. If so, did you buy in the past 12 months?

A. S. Carrier Contract of the Contract of the

☐ Yes ☐ No

15. If no, do you plan on buying in the next 12 months?

☐ Yes

O No

16. How do you buy your DVDs?

☐ On-line

☐ Retailer

☐ Mail Order (DVD Club)

Total

THE GOREY DETAILS

TODAY'S ACTION STARS? WUSSES!

Chris Gore, TOTAL MOVIE's Editor-at-Large and the world's third-largest consumer of popcorn and Gummi Bears, has a few things to sav about Hollywood's limp-wristed new breed of action heroes.

ollywood is a town built on trends, and I've just noticed a very disturbing new one. It came right out of left field, and it's got me so flummoxed that I'm not sure what to do about it. It's a complex problem, one that... oh, screw it. I'll just lay it on the line: the new breed of action stars are all wusses.

Time was, if you went to see an action flick, your eight bucks would buy you Arnold Schwarzenegger cocking his

shotgun one-handed while blazing through a wall of fire on a Harley. or Sly Stallone mowing down a legion of armed grunts with his M60 as he pirouetted his way through a hail of bullets. At the very least you'd see Steven Seagal kicking the crap out of a knife-spinning terrorist after single-handedly taking over a battleship. But, with a combined age of 152 (yes, 152), these three aging, "classical" action stars are about ready to be put out to pasture.

They can't fill these bad-ass roles

forever - in fact, they can barely fill them now.

Schwarzenegger's last actioner, End of Days, seemed to me

like a swan song of sorts. It felt like a throwback to his hal-

malt liquor and red meat, I think I'd stand a pretty good chance with any of these new-wave wusses.

Cranked up on enough

who. I remember thinking, "Oh come on, I could kick

I can pinpoint for you exactly when the trend toward the modern, sensitive, lightweight action hero began. It was 1988: Tim Burton was casting the lead for Batman, perhaps the most hotly-contested Hollywood role of the decade, and one which called for a dark, intimidating figure well versed **CLASSIC ACTION STAR:** in the ancient and subtle art of kicking ass. And who did he pick? Arnie? Mel? No, Michael frickin' Keaton, that's

> Keaton's ass!" People. what have we come to when costume designers have to build a "muscle suit" for the heroic lead because the actor himself lacks the pecs (and the chin) to look bad-ass on his own?

> But we've entered a new millennium, and we need new heroes. So let's take a look at the rundown of today's top action stars. You start

with Will Smith, who delivers one-liners better than anybody in the business but still looks in permanent danger of being blown away by the next strong gust of wind.

> men amidst the rest of Armageddon's ultramacho ensemble.

TALE OF THE TAPE

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

Height: 6'3" Weight: 225 lbs.

ACTION QUALIFICATIONS: Still beefier than anyone else on the block. A walking, talking Jane's Guide To Modern Weapons. Has saved the world countless times. Does not require such pansy-ass concepts as "dialogue" to be intimidating.

"NEW" ACTION STAR:

BEN AFFLECK

Height: 6'2" Weight: 170 lbs.

ACTION QUALIFICATIONS: Has managed to avoid getting killed so far. Heavily-moussed hairdo holds up well under fire. Able to get into Liv Tyler's pants using only an animal cracker. Still working on those one-liners, though, and needs to get around to calling that "Chuck Norris Total Gym" infomercial.

NON-ACTION STAR:

CHRIS GORE

Height: 5'10" (moussed) Weight: 160 lbs. (wet)

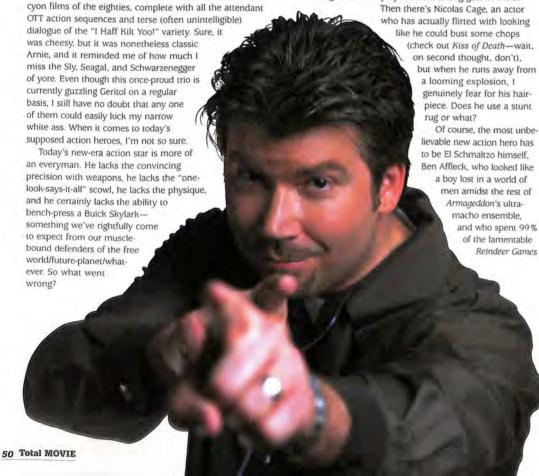
ACTION QUALIFICATIONS: Can withstand multiple blows to the head due to freak sense-deadening dodgeball injury. Some martial arts experience: has entire original series of Kung-Fu on tape. Could easily kick Ben Affleck's ass (if awarded first punch).

getting slapped around (and, notably, outbuffed) by Gary Sinise. Affleck was actually at his most frightening as a batwielding bully in Dazed and Confused, and there was something about his beer-guzzling working stiff in Good Will Hunting that hinted you wouldn't want to get on his bad side once he's loaded. But since then, his on-screen presence has been about as imposing as Jake Lloyd's. Let's be honest: most of us would like our chances with Ben Affleck should we ever spill his drink in a bar and need to step outside to "discuss" the matter.

And how can we forget Keanu Reeves? The king of the monosyllable's stock rose immeasurably after The Matrix his lightning-fast jiu-jitsu stylings more than made up for his puny frame - but let's not forget that most of those moves were computer-assisted. Let's see Keanu try to whup somebody when he doesn't have any fancy-schmancy wires to fly around on, huh?

Bottom line: I'm not really sure if any of these guys stand a shot at being the next Arnie. I like my action stars with a little meat on the bone, and more than anything. I have to believe they could kick my ass. Cranked up on enough malt liquor and red meat, I think I'd stand a pretty good chance with any of these new-wave wusses. So if our classic heroes are really going to retire from action movies, can the next generation at least go on a crash weight-gain program and hire a personal trainer? I know three older guys who might be available.

> Chris Gore is the editor of Film Threat (www.filmthreat.com) and the host of The New Movie Show, which airs on the FX Network. In his spare time, he solves baffling crimes as the costumed avenger known as The Weasel.



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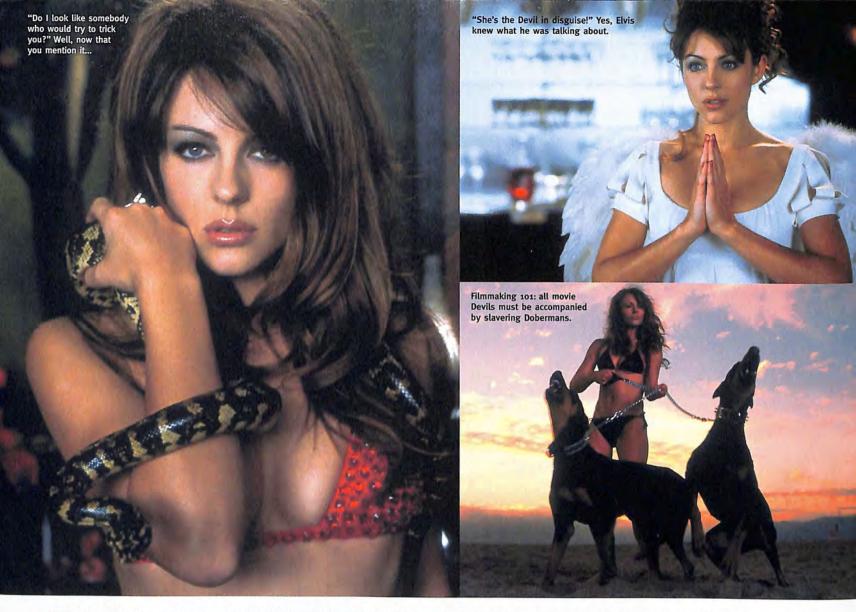
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Playing the sexiest Devil you've ever laid eyes on in a new remake of the '60s classic *Bedazzled*, Elizabeth Hurley does tempting turns as a cheerleader, a French maid, a nurse... even a "naughty meter maid." One thing's for certain: lusting after Liz has never been easier.

By Gary Whitta



n the 1967 British comedy classic *Bedazzled*, Dudley Moore plays luckless burger-flipper Stanley, obsessed with a beautiful co-worker but doomed to live out the life of a lonely, pathetic loser – until he meets The Devil, played by a typically crotchety Peter Cook. Offered seven wishes in exchange for his soul, Stanley re-invents himself as a rock star, a millionaire industrialist, a famed intellectual and more – only to have every fantasy turn around and bite him in the ass. Be careful what you wish for, indeed.

Twentieth Century Fox's millennial remake keeps the original's basic plot intact, but adds plenty of modern-day wrinkles – our hapless hero is now a computer nerd played by Brendan Fraser, and the Devil... well, it sure ain't Peter Cook, and while we've yet to see the finished film, here at TOTAL MOVIE we're already applauding this particular re-casting decision. "Most men are bedeviled by women, so why not a female Devil?" argues the new Bedazzled's director Harold Ramis, also responsible for Groundhog Day, Analyze This and the classic Caddyshack. "One of the things most people remember from the original

Bedazzled is Raquel Welch in red lingerie playing the part of Lust. And I thought, for most men, lust would be one of the Devil's most powerful weapons. So we made a list of every devastating woman in Hollywood and Elizabeth Hurley was way at the top of the list. When she came in to meet with us, she had just the right kind of comic spirit. She's very sophisticated and very sexual and powerful."

"I'd never seen the original film but caught up with it after being offered this one, and I thought it was fantastic," says Hurley. "I'd always adored Peter Cook and thought he was fabulous. It's quite frightening to think that you have to step into one of the greatest

comedian ever's shoes, but luckily our Devils are chalk and cheese. His was a laconic cynic whereas mine is an exuberant, badly-behaved tormentor."

In the 2000 Bedazzled, perennial geek Elliot Richards (Fraser) signs away his soul to Hurley's Devil in exchange for seven chances to magically re-create his non-existent life in any form he wishes. But just as in the original, every wish has an unwritten loophole that allows the Devil to turn the dream into a nightmare – Fraser's initial wish to be a rich, handsome and powerful businessman actually

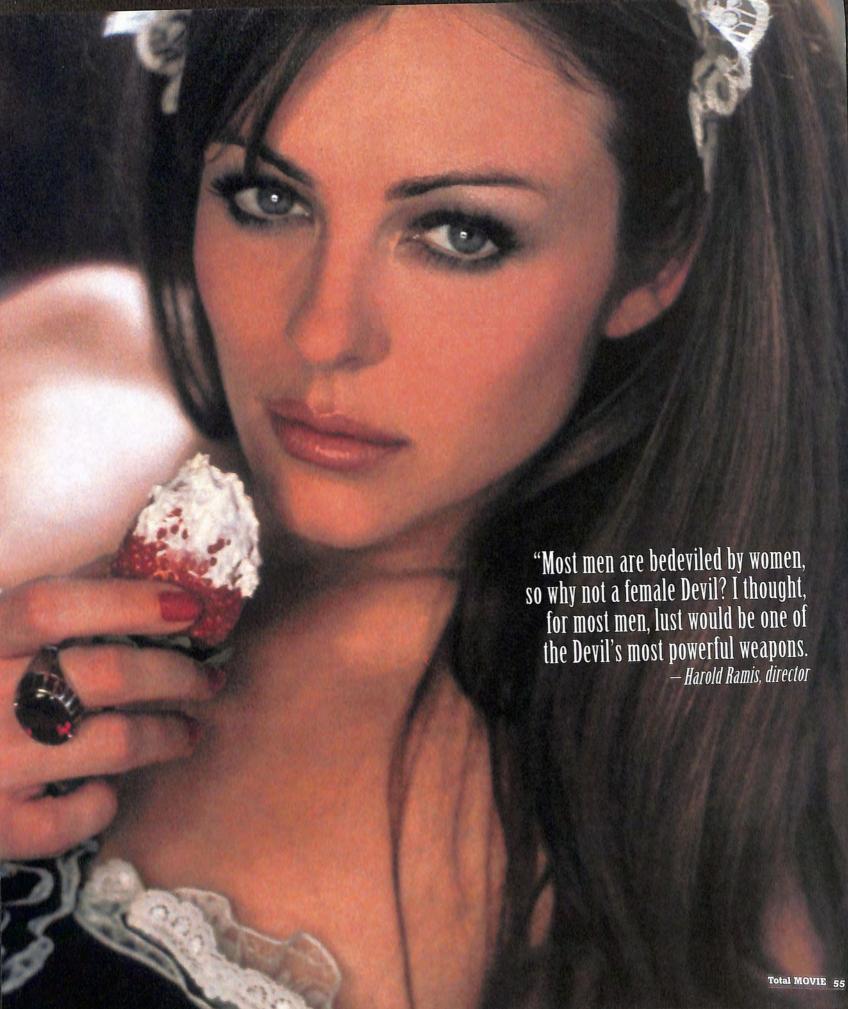
"In one scene she's at a courthouse and is supposedly dressed as a lawyer, but she wears a skirt so short, I can't even call it a skirt. It's just kind of a piece of material."

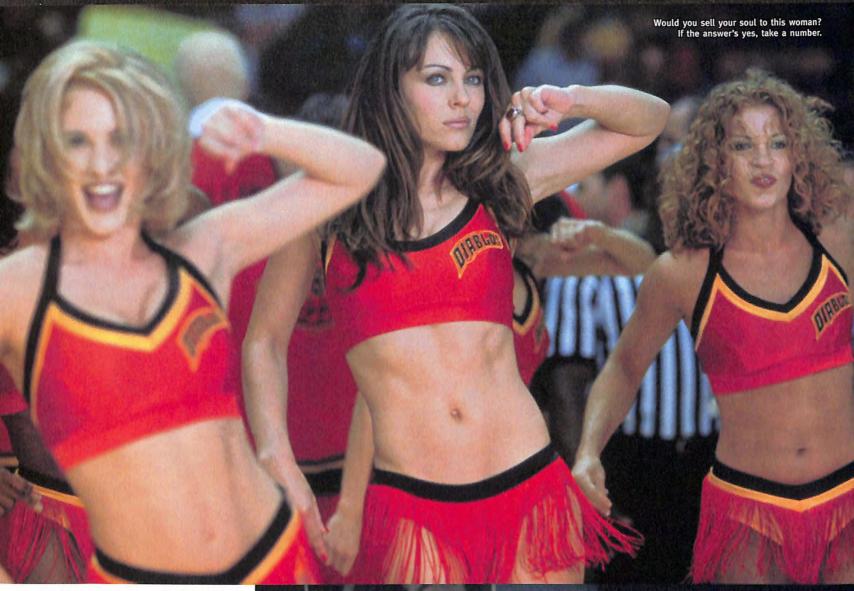
- Harold Ramis, director

turns him into a Colombian drug lord. Later attempts reincarnate him as an NBA all-star and a world-famous British rock guitarist, and each scenario is book-ended with a venomous twist supplied by Hurley. "Our Devil is more naughty than evil," says Ramis. "Besides being very beautiful, I wanted her to be really sophisticated and much more worldly than Elliot. We wanted her to be not only lusty, but wicked and very changeable so that every time you think you know what she's up to, she totally fools you. Once you start buying into one of her emotions, she turns on a dime and is someone or something else. Which also

seemed consistent with what men perceive feminine nature to be – changeable. So the Devil is mercurial in that way – she's always one step ahead of Elliot."

As Fraser's character goes through a succession of different looks to suit his wishes, so does Hurley's – providing a nice excuse to dress her up in a series of increasingly sexy and salacious outfits. "Elizabeth is constantly alluring and appealing," says Ramis. "She goes through a series of rather naughty changes. She's a naughty French maid, a naughty nurse, a naughty meter maid. And I have to say she always looks pretty sexy. In one scene she's at a courthouse and is supposedly dressed as a lawyer, but she wears a skirt so short, I can't





even call it a skirt. It's just kind of a piece of material. She was always very conscious of how her wardrobe would affect her persona."

The job of creating Hurley's Devilish look fell to costume designer Deena Appel. "In the original film there were the seven deadly sins, among them greed and envy and lust," she says. "So lust and sex is a big part of the story. Hurley's Devil embodies all of those characters at once. We wanted to use a lot of red."

"Elizabeth has something like twenty costume changes," adds Ramis. "Deena came in with the idea that the Devil could change wardrobe at will. She would walk through a door in one outfit and come out the other side wearing a different costume. She gets in a car wearing one thing and gets out of the

car wearing something else.

She can change clothes to suit her whim."

Check out Hurley

– oh, and

Brendan Fraser

and everyone else,

of course – in the full theatrical



trailer for Bedazzled.

FROM THE ACADEMY AWARD-WINNING WRITER OF "THE USUAL SUSPECTS"



WHEN WILLIAM PETER **BLATTY'S**



(4)

You can listen to any number of cobweb-ridden film critics drone on about how much Citizen Kane is good for you, but if you want something with a real lingering aftertaste, go see The Exorcist.

On December 26, 1973, Warner Bros. put a chill into the Christmas holiday with one of the most controversial films ever made. Even the studio was so frightened of its impact that the film was initially released in just 30 theaters.

It began with a best-selling novel by William Peter Blatty. From there, Director William Friedkin, hot off the Oscar-winning success of *The French Connection*, painstakingly crafted a documentary-like tale of possession that explores issues of faith, the limitations of the Church and modern science,

(0):313

Turn down the

lights, crank up

the volume, and

check out the all-new

trailer for The Exorcist. Don't

say we didn't warn you...

and the breakdown of the family. The Roman Catholic Church gave both book and film its stamp of approval while others, such as the Reverend Billy Graham, "felt the power of evil buried within the celluloid of the film itself." Upon first viewing, some audience members ran for their nearest house of worship while others ran screaming into the street.

On September 22, 28 years after it first appeared, Warner Bros. is releasing a new edition of *The Exorcist* with approximately ten minutes of restored

footage and newly-recorded sound. Remember what happened when Steven Spielberg and George Lucas monkeyed with their own previously-released films (respectively. Close Encounters of the Third Kind and Star Wars)? Yup, they screwed 'em up. So what's the point of changing a film that nearly everyone already considers an all-time classic?





Priest Frees Mt. Rainier Boy Reported Held in Devil's Grip

That was the headline of an article in *The Washington Post* on August 20, 1949. It told the story of a 14-year-old boy who that year had suffered a three-month ordeal of possession that ended in a series of 20 to 30 performances of the rite of exorcism. The tale began with poltergeist activity: dripping sounds were heard in the boy's grandmother's room. Scratching noises came from under the floorboards. The situation worsened as the boy had violent fits and screamed profanities. Later, he spoke Latin. His bed would shake, and there were even reports of welts on his body that formed words and images of the devil.

The family was Lutheran, but after their minister witnessed paranormal activity, he recommended, "You have to see a Catholic priest. The Catholics know about things like this." Father Albert Hughes performed an initial exorcism at the Jesuit-run hospital in Georgetown, but he was attacked, and

the subject's condition only got worse. The welts and telekinetic activity were now common. The boy was taken to relatives in St. Louis where the case was assigned to Father William Bowdern and Father Raymond Bishop, assisted by Father Walter Halloran. The group performed many unsuccessful rites of exorcism as new reports came of chills and stenches in the air, and distortion of the boy's facial features. On April 18, the boy suddenly announced, "Satan! Satan! I am St. Michael, and I command you, Satan, and other

evil spirits, to leave this body in the name of Dominus. Immediately! Now! Now! "Just like that, the kid was cured.

While the Church later authorized a private investigation which concluded the possession was not genuine, the exorcists thought differently. Bowdern was heard to have commented to Father Halloran about the results of the inquiry, "We know better; we were there."

One man who took note was Father Eugene Gallagher. He presented this story to his theology class at the Jesuit-run Georgetown University. It aroused the interest of one student: a junior English Literature major named William Peter Blatty.

Blatty came from a religious family and had spent his life in Catholic schools. If a case such as this could be authenticated, documented and publicized, it could provide a document of faith. Wouldn't the proof of the existence of such quantifiable evil also prove the existence of God?

The young man was encouraged to write a paper on the subject by his instructors. The idea of a book on the case stayed with him for years.

Writing the Novel

While he continued to toy with a story about an exorcism, Blatty was writing comedic novels and screenplays. He wrote the Warren Beatty-led *Promise Her Anything* and began a lengthy association with director Blake Edwards, beginning with the second (and best) Pink Panther film, *A Shot in the Dark*. Blatty finally got serious about the exorcism book after Bantam Books produced an advance. During a year of research, material on the original 1949 case proved hard to find. His old teacher put him in contact



with one of the participants, Father Bowdern. In 1968, Blatty received his first contact with a real exorcist:

Dear Mr. Blatty.

... As you stated in your letter, it is very difficult to find any authentic literature on cases of possession; at least, I could not find any when I was involved in such a case. Accordingly, [Father Bishop] kept a minute account each day of the happenings each preceding day and night. One reason being that memory can deceive one unless a diary is kept as the events happen. Our diary would be most helpful to anyone placed in a similar position as an exorcist in any future case.

...I can assure you of one thing: the case in which I was involved was

explore issues of faith.

Finding Friedkin... and SHOWTIME!

The Exorcist was published in 1971 and was an instant hit, beginning a phenomenal run toward 13 million sales. Warner Bros. bought the movie rights, but after ten years as a screenwriter, Blatty knew what a studio could do to his book, so he insisted upon being the producer. But he still wasn't even sure if the book could be made into a movie. While he worked on the screenplay, he argued with the studio over a choice of director. Mike Nichols (The Graduate) said, "I'm not going to stake my career and the picture's success or failure on the performance of a twelveyear-old girl." Bonnie and Clyde director Arthur Penn was teaching at Yale. Stanley Kubrick was interested, but didn't want Blatty for a producer. John Boorman, hot off Deliverance, said he was "repelled by the book."

Eventually Warners set its sights on Mark Rydell (On Golden Pond). Blatty liked Rydell but not his movies. Warners still pushed for Rydell and asked Blatty to look at his newest film, The Cowboys, with John Wayne. Blatty walked out halfway through. "Depressed," he says, "I had dinner and then went to a movie. I went for diversion, not to study." But that film was The French Connection. As Friedkin's latest became a huge hit, Blatty sent him a copy of The Exorcist. On January 28, 1972, he took the job.

Making a Better Horror Film

One of Friedkin's first acts as director was to reject Blatty's screenplay as too unfaithful to the book. Flashbacks were eliminated to provide a more

straightforward narrative. Circling passages of the novel to include, Friedkin worked with Blatty to craft a final script.

The same care and attitude went into the picture's look. Friedkin hated horror films and had no intention of employing their schtick. *The Exorcist* would have normal-looking people in a normal-looking house. He hired *The French Connection* cinematographer Owen Roizman to give it that same documentary feel.

There would be no cheap scares leaping from the shadows, either. Much of the really nasty stuff prior to the exorcism occurs during the day. Friedkin also developed the now-famous technique where first you hear the freakiness, then the camera tracks up the stairs to Regan's bedroom door, then you get a reaction shot (usually from mom), and only then do you get the payoff. It all works to the point where just a shot of those stairs or that door can give you the willies.



asting Trouble

The casting of a movie is always critical, and with *The Exorcist* this task was never going to be easy. The studio had little input, as Blatty relates: "Friedkin and I mutually agreed that we each would have veto power over the other's choice for the leads."

Among the help brought on board were six technical advisors: three doctors and three priests, and Fathers Thomas Bermingham, John Nicola, and William O'Malley. Friedkin had a fondness for using non-actors and put nearly all of them in the film. O'Malley had written a review of the book criticizing the depiction of Karras' best friend, Father Dyer, so Friedkin cast him in the part.

Audrey Hepburn and Anne Bancroft

turned down the part of Regan's mother, Chris MacNeil. Blatty's choice, Jane Fonda, sent a telegram indicating she wanted no part of this "capitalist bullshit." Friedkin eventually decided on character actress Ellen Burstyn.

Blatty had wanted Paul Scofield for Merrin, but he was overruled. They settled on the revered Max Von Sydow, well known for his Ingmar Bergman films, but 30 years too young for the part. Four hours of makeup each day would correct that.

For Father Karras, Friedkin and Blatty nixed each other's choices of Gene Hackman and Marlon Brando. Jack Nicholson wanted the role but no one could picture him as a priest. They eventually signed Stacey Keach.

Shortly after that, Friedkin took in the new play, *That Championship Season*, which would go on to win both the Tony Award and the Pulitzer Prize. Friedkin thought that "it reeked of failed Catholicism," and wanted to meet the writer, Jason Miller. Miller finally got around to reading the book, and though he'd never acted in a film before, he had spent years studying to be a priest before

William Peter Blatty

The creator of *The Exorcist* reveals his reasons for an all-new version of the film – and what he knows about the real thing.

TOTAL MOVIE: William Friedkin had final cut of the original release - so

why are we seeing this new version now? BLATTY: This is the first version of the film that Friedkin ever showed me. When I first saw it, I embraced it. I thought that, at that time, it had a chance of being a little masterpiece. I've tried for 25 years to persuade Billy, Warner Bros., or anyone who would listen to me to put it back in its original form, which is a vastly superior form. This is the way it should have always been, from the beginning. This is the version of the film that I loved.

Why weren't you aware of changes made after that cut?

I wasn't there, I was happily at home, not dreaming it was being changed from what I had seen. When I asked Billy why he cut it down like that, he said, 'I didn't know the picture was going to be a hit. I really didn't think that anybody could sit still for more than two hours of anything." But it went out and it was a monster hit. That first cut – his cut, not mine – I thought was a masterpiece. What followed, in my opinion, was not. It was just a roller-coaster ride from shock to shock.

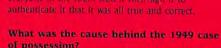
What scenes did you want restored?

The first key scene is the exchange between Father Karras and Metrin on the staircase, which is the moral center of the film, in that same spiritual vein, the whole back end is now much more spiritual. With the exchange of Karras' medal, formerly you saw Chris say, "This was his, I thought you'd like to have it," and the

gives it to Father Dyer. Now what you see is how it is in the novel — he says, "Why don't you keep it?" and hands it back to her. The key point is she accepts it, this atheistic woman, which is meant to signal at least the opening of a door to the possibility of religious belief. That was very important.

How many cases of possession could you find that you felt were authentic? There's not a great deal of it out there. There were only three that I could track down any mention of in America in the 20° century, Father Bowdern was the only person I could

ever find that had performed an exorcism. He told me he had the same problem when he got the assignment. That's why he kept the diary, as an aid for future exorcists. At the end of the day, he would have everyone in the room read it then sign it to authenticate it that it was all true and correct.



In the authentic case, I don't know what's at work there, It has to be the power of faith, In my belief of the reality of possession, is a belief in simply a discarded intelligence able somehow to take over a human organism. Every case that I've ever read about was always preceded by mental illness, a problem with drugs, or both. It suggested to me a shattering of the personality and then something can slip in. A door opens. That I have a menty strong belief in

When we come to demons, fallen angels and so on, I don't know about that. I like the word demon as a description of majevolent and diabolical behavior, but not in a literal sense in the 20" century, there's a shift of almost all cases of demonic possession to possession by spirits of the dead. Spirits don't enter people who seem to be going about their usual tasks as webmasters or ad executives but secretly they're killing people because there's this spirit inside of them. No, the first thing it does is ravage the body with fits of hysterical psychomotor activity and attempts to constantly rip and tear at your own body and face.



"This is the way it should have always been, from the beginning.
This is the version of the film that I loved."

having a crisis of faith. He called Friedkin and begged for a screen test, which won the director over. Keach was paid off and released from his contract.

The most difficult role to cast was, of course, the girl. Friedkin wasn't sure he could use an actual 12-year-old, and if he did, how much of the weirder stuff she could do. It didn't help that casting agents would only send over the freaky kids. Linda Blair's manager wouldn't send her because she was too normal-looking, so her mother took the young model to audition instead. From a pool of a thousand girls, the director finally cast the first-time actress as Regan. After a great deal of effort, Friedkin had cast two character actors and two others with no previous film experience in the four leads. No doubt the studio was thrilled.

And Now Their Troubles Really Begin

The film was budgeted at just over \$4 million with a shooting schedule of 81 days. Friedkin had shot *The French Connection* in just five weeks, but he admitted that, as he had no idea how he would do the special effects, this film would probably take longer. It turned out to be *much* longer.

Production moved slowly. Whatever time it took to get a shot just right was granted. On the rare days when everything went right, cast and crew might expect to get only a few setups done. While shooting in Georgetown, the crew could barely record any sound as they were under so much air traffic. Due to the imperfections of optical effects in 1973, nearly all of the special effects had to be accomplished on the set. Some effects, such as the infamous spider-walk, required a lot of trial and error.

Because of the number of effects that occur in Regan's bedroom, several variations of the bed were necessary and a second bedroom was built with a refrigeration unit so you could see the actors' breath in the demonic cold of those later scenes. As Linda Blair was wearing only a nightgown for these scenes, the bed had to be rigged with heating pads. This "cold" room created a number of problems. It took a while to lower the room temperature to zero degrees. The cast would then come in for rehearsals, but then the set lights would warm the room back up to where you could no longer see the actors' breath, so you had to chill the room again to shoot the scene. Altogether, it took nearly three months to shoot the 15 minutes of exorcism footage used – nearly the amount of time the studio expected the entire movie would take.

The End Is In Sight

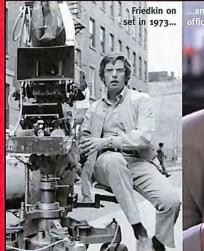
Domestic production finally wrapped on May 17, 1973 – 187 days of shooting, and 150% over budget. Not everyone could celebrate, however, as there was still a month of filming in Iraq to look forward to. Originally planned for March, the sequence now had to be shot in the middle of a Middle Eastern summer. The Iraq shoot included such hijinks as the demon Pazuzu statue ending up in Hong Kong and a search for the head of the country's secret police after a failed assassination attempt on the Iraqi president. This portion of the story saw an end when Max Von Sydow finally lost his temper and declared, "I give you four days! Then I'm going."

The movie wrapped on July 15, nearly a year after Friedkin shot the first test footage.

Post-Production

The director's perfectionist tendencies hadn't ended yet. While Lalo Schifrin was recording the score, Friedkin took a strong disliking to the music and







In Defense of William Friedkin

Into the mouth of madness with a maverick director who took perfectionism to insane new levels...

There is no more controversial figure at the center of *The Exorcist* than director William Friedkin. Accounts of his behavior during production have been quite, um, colorful. Episodes include:

- The scene where Regan slaps her mother to the floor was not going well when Ellen Burstyn asked Friedkin if the cord pulling her down could not be pulled so hard. He agreed, but Burstyn claims that as she turned away, she saw the director give Effects Supervisor Marcel Vercoutere the signal to pull harder. As a result, she landed awkwardly and hurt herself badly enough to miss several days of work. Friedkin used this take in the movie, so the expression of pain you see on her face is the real thing.
- In the first scene where Father Karras is on the wrong end of a puke stream, the green goo was supposed to hit Jason Miller's chest. Though he tried to placate an angry Miller, Friedkin still used the take of the vomit splattering him in the face.
- Father William O'Malley was having trouble with the scene where he
 gives last rites to Pather Karras. After 15 takes, Friedkin walked up to the tired
 O'Malley and asked, "Do you trust me?" Following O'Malley's positive response, the
 auteur slapped him hard in the face. The resulting adrenaline is the real reason
 O'Malley's hands are shaking in this scene.
- As production were on, Friedkin found he could get his cast into
 character by firing a gun loaded with blanks when they didn't expect it. It
 got to the point where Max Von Sydow would greet cinematographer Rolzman each
 day with, "Good morning, Owen, and where are the guns today?"

So was Friedkin nuts? Or were all these mind games really justified? We're inclined to think the latter. In the words of Makeup Designer Dick Smith, "Billy always figured that a little extra motivation for the actors wouldn't hart." We're sure these shenanigans didn't make him too popular, and at some time or other most of the cast and crew

wished it wasn't just the filterional film director who got rossed out the window. But no matter what they went through, they praise Friedkin for getting the best performances possible out of all of them.

Some people may think he's pretentious and arrogant, but history is on his side. Whatever you may think of Jade and Rules of Ingogement, he still directed the greatest corror film of all time and you didn't.



1

chucked the sound reels into the street.

After sound designers spent 150 hours trying to manipulate Linda Blair's voice into that of the demon, the director tossed that out too. Instead he called upon deep-voiced actress Mercedes McCambridge to do the dialogue. Using a carton of cigarettes and a fair amount of whiskey, in addition to swallowing raw eggs, to go the extra mile with her voice, McCambridge even had her hands bound like Linda Blair's so that she could get into character.

Warner Bros. did stand firm on one issue: the film had to make a December 26 release date – the latest possible release to qualify for the Academy Awards. It would barely make it.

Friedkin stated that the first person he had to please was William Peter Blatty. After the writer saw a 132-minute cut of the picture, he was thrilled.

Content, Blatty went on vacation to Aspen, Colorado. Then, the director had some second thoughts.

Why There's a Version You Never Saw

Friedkin decided his first cut was too long and re-edited it to get closer to the two-hour mark. While writer and director had agreed to lose the spider-walk scene and Chris and Regan's sightseeing tour of Washington, some of the cuts underlined the different takes each had about the meaning of the movie.

Friedkin wanted to explore the "mysteries of faith." As such, he cut much of the final act to create greater ambiguity. He cut a scene near the end where Father Merrin explains to Karras why they (and the audience) were being subjected to all this horror. He also cut the ending to the point where the last thing you see is



Linda Blair

Lisa Fishman-makeup/hair

Gary Whitta meets the actress whose performance as a teenage cutie-pie possessed by a vomit-spewing demon turned more than a few heads...

At age 14, Linda Blair spent three months fied to a bed in a refrigerated room, her face covered in foam rubber and mouth stuffed with plastic tubes rigged to shoot out globs of

split-pea soup. Not an ideal first experience for a child actor, perhaps, but for better or worse her Oscar-nominated performance as Regan MacNeil in *The Exorcist* has become one of the most infamous and talked-about turns in movie history.

Today, it's still a little strange to look at her and recognize those eyes as Regan's, but at 4) Blair is a feisty, energetic woman with a perpetually sunny disposition and an infectious laugh. Perhaps most surprising is how she's

still enthusiastic, passionate and patient when talking about a role that has, in a sense, haunted her for nearly 30 years

Raised in Connecticut, the young Blair got Into showbiz with child modeling and commercials work, but was having trouble breaking into anything bigger. "I got turned down for *Flipper*," she remembers, "and was really depressed." Depressed enough to be considering quitting when she got her first real movie audition – for *The Exercist*." I knew nothling about the material. They gave me a paragraph to read, and it was definitely difficult, very confusing to a child. I temember thinking, "This sounds really filthyl I can't even tell my mother!" I think it was their way of removing some of the more timid candidates."

Friedkin, it turned out, selected Blair from hundreds of applicants for the very reason she'd gotten into modeling in the first place - she was the quintessential clean-cut, all-American little girl." Billy

wanted a very healthy child," remembers Blair. "You would see other kids at the casting sessions, kind of sickly-looking – I think they misunderstood that maybe the girl was not well. That's what caught people off-guard and unnerved them so much, that this was happening to this normal, healthy, bubbly girl – the little Walt Disney kid."

Blair was given a copy of Blatty's novel to read, but she still didn't quite realize what she was getting involved with. "I had the same questions everybody else had. How are they gonna make the head turn around? How does she jump up and down off the bed? At that age, a young person did not understand all the religious things that come up later in life. I was not raised Catholic, so I didn't know what the devil was. To me it was just a fictitious character, like a monster." Blair's naïveté continued after she got the part. "We never discussed religion on the set, or who this character was," she says. "It wasn't until the film was released that the press and public would ask these questions, and I started catching on that there was much more to it than I knew."

Blair's experiences during filming were a combination of hardship and boredom."You didn't laugh on the set," she remembers."I just sat in the bed and watched a lot." A sauna had to be built on-set to provide relief from the long sessions in the freezing bedroom, and the demonic

make-up involved an arduous four-hour application process every day."One of the questions I get asked most Is, was it scary to make?" says Blain."And the answer is no, because I was what everybody was afraid of, I certainly got to look at myself in the mirror all the time, but to me It was just sad-looking. That depressed me, that they would want to make me ugly. Little girls want to be

In pre-demonic cutie-pie mode (with Ellen Burstyn).

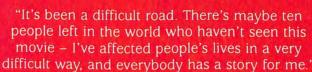
princesses" As if the sub-zero temperatures and intense make-up weren't enough, Blair was added to the production's casualty statistics during the scene in which Regan is thrashed back and forward on the bed – the larring movements of the hand-operated lever to which she was

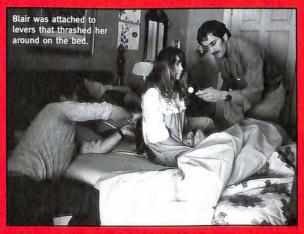
strapped left her with a recurring back injury in spite of all this, though, she's united with the rest of the cast in praising Friedkin for doing what needed to be done to make the movie what it is, "Billy is a genius. Many actors have told me they'd kill to work with him. Nobody else could have done The Exercist like he did. After all these years,

I'm sure it would have been a fallure if they had tried."

These days, Blair is keen to re-invent herself for a new generation of kids as

"something other than that girl from the movie they all sit down to watch every Halloween." Hence her recurring role in the kids' comedy series S-Club In LA, currently airing on the Fox Family Channel, and her website www.thealternet.com, which broadcasts her beliefs in alternative medicine, animal rights and environmental issues. No horror fan herself, she hasn't seen The Exorcist since the 25' Anniversary re-release three years ago – but for all the fallout, controversy and unwanted attention it's brought her, she's still proud to have been a part of it. "Had another child done it, I really would have worried for them," she says. "It's been a difficult road. There's maybe 10 people left in the world who haven't seen this movie – I've affected people's lives in a very difficult way, and everybody has a story for me. But I believe that Blatty was meant to write it, Billy was meant to direct it, and the world was meant to experience it. And I've been along for the ride."





Father Dyer walking away from the Prospect Street steps.

Blatty had written the novel as an exploration and affirmation of faith. But audiences were now left to their interpretation of the movie's hard-core vulgarity. The writer was neither pleased nor quiet about it. The restoration of these scenes is the main reason Blatty has been asking for a new version almost since the movie was originally released.

Thankfully, there's much more to the new version (see sidebar, at right). It's freakier, deeper, and thanks to a new soundtrack, louder. Kids weaned on *The Blair Witch Project* can find out what naturalistic horror is like with some actual payoff while audiences across the country will have another reason to sleep with the lights on.



10 Freaky Things You Never Knew About The Exorcist

- The character of Chris MacNeil is based on Blatty's friend and then-neighbor, Shirley
 MacLaine. Due to a dispute between the two about a production deal, she took the lead
 instead in The Possession of Joel Delaney.
- When the Washington D.C. Fire Department saw, from miles away, the artificial fog and bright lights used for shooting the classic scene of Father Merrin's arrival at the MacNeil house, they thought it was a big fire and raced to the scene.
- After viewing Alejandro Jodorowsky's El Topo, Friedkin hired Gonzalo Gavira, the Mexican sound artist responsible for many of that film's sound effects. Gavira created the sound of Regan's head turning 360 degrees by twisting a crewmember's wallet in front of the microphone.
- After shipping the statue of the demon Pazuzu to Iraq, William Friedkin placed raw
 meat around the bottom to attract vultures to circle in the shot. The locals thought he
 was a crazed American who had brought in his own god and was making sacrifices to it.
- Due to the distance of the MacNeil house from the long flight of stairs on Prospect Street, a fake extension was built so Regan's bedroom could have one window to shine on Father Merrin's entrance (as seen in the movie poster) and one within throwing distance of the stairs.
- The producer arguing with Burke Dennings in the scene where Chris MacNeil is shooting the movie is William Peter Blatty. Friedkin had asked Blatty to improvise the unscripted scene the night before.
- Warner Bros. sued to prevent the production of a blaxploitation version of the film called *The Blaxocist*. Damn their scaly hides!
- William Friedkin discovered first- (and last-) time actress Vasiliki Maliaros, who portrayed Father Karras' mother, working in a Greek deli.
- J. Lee Thompson, the director of The Guns of Navarone, the original Cape Fear, and the Blatty-penned John Goldfarb, Please Come Home, had agreed to play the part of Burke Dennings until he discovered Blatty had based the character on him.
- After William Friedkin threw out his score, Lalo Schifrin used it instead for The Amityville Horror – and was nominated for an Academy Award.

You Haven't Seen The Exorcist Until...

The all-new version: what they added - and why

With approximately ten minutes of new footage, is "The Version You've Never Seen," debuting September 22, really that different from the original? Well, yes. Most of the changes break down into four areas for different purposes. The first change that most will notice is not one you can see, but rather one you can hear. The gut-wrenching sound, which originally won an Oscar, has been completely redone. In 1973, movies only had mono soundtracks, so an updated multitrack digital edition was called for. New music cues are scattered about, too. The result is stunning — even if there was nothing new besides the sound, *The Exercist* would be worth seeing again.

The first of the major new footage is Regan's original visit to the doctor, which occurs after the descration of the statue. This new scene is quite long but gives the possession more of a gradual progression instead of marking its territory full-tilt during the party scene, it's now here that we get our first glimpse of the "Captain Howdy" face that appears in subliminal blink-and-you'll-miss-it cuts throughout the film.

The sequence after Burke Dennings is killed has been fully Jacked up. Aside from a variety of subliminal images sprinkled throughout, the most noticeable addition is the legendarily freaky "spider-walk" segment in which Regan, weirdly arched over on her back, scuttles down the stairs on her hands and feet like some demented insect. A



lengthy version of this scene appeared in Mark Kermode's BBC documentary *The Fear of God* (included on the currently-available 25" Anniversary DVD), but that's not the version that now appears in the movie. According to William Peter Biatty, "Billy and I were going through all the excised material and we thought we had seen all of the footage. We had gone on to another scene and at the end of that reel was the second shot that's now the spider-walk scene. Since none of us were expecting it, it was a shock." The original scene, occurring after Chris MacNell learns of Dennings' death, ran much longer as Regan flips over at the bottom of the stair and chases Sharon around the room. Blatty explains, "I'm the one who pleaded that we cut the remainder of it. It worked very well in the novel, but no director could realize that and make it anything but silly on screen, Now it takes you by surprise."

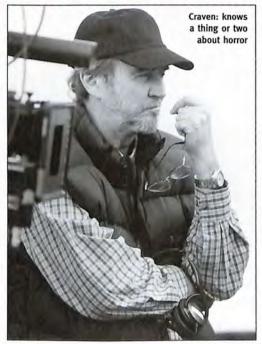
The real reason for this release and for Blatty's nagging of Friedkin since the last one is the set of scenes restored in the final act, during the exorcism and the extended ending. As it was, Friedkin had streamlined the exorcism sequence to feel like the climax of an action movie. Three key restored scenes flesh out Father Merrin as he interacts with Karras and Chris. "The key scene is the exchange between Karras and Merrin on the staircase," says Blatty. "There is no moral center without it and suddenly it all becomes clear why you've been subjected to all this shock and horror."

The final change, vital to Blatty, is the restoration of the original ending, including a prolonged exchange between Chris MacNell and Father Dyer, and another between Dyer and Kinderman that extends past the original ending. Finally, says Blatty, it's the way he always wanted it to be. "The whole back end is now much more spiritual." It's now clearer that the good guys won and that all's once again right with the world – of course, that's with the caveat that a whole new generation used to nothing more severe than the Scream movies can now have The Exorcist rattling around inside their heads and dreams for a while as well...



The 20 Scariest Movies... EVER!

Picked by TOTAL MOVIE - picked apart by Wes Craven



readers through TOTAL MOVIE's picks for the 20 scariest movies of all time when he told us that *The Exorcist* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* – two of our own top fear finishers – are the two films that truly scared the bejesus out of him. (Great minds think alike – Ed). Oh, and there is that small matter of Craven being one of the most consistently brilliant directors of modern fright films – not only does one of his own movies rank high on our list, but his *Scream* trilogy toyed mercilessly with the most revered works in the horror canon. Now, Craven spills his guts about what he *really* thinks of these classic fearfests as he takes on TOTAL MOVIE's chilling choices...

66 Total LOVIE

THE EXORCIST

"I'd say there are two movies that really genuinely scared me in my life – you know, in a way that I was terrified rather than just scared – and *The Exorcist* was one of them. I saw it in Hollywood when I had first come out here in the early '70s, right after doing *Last House On The Left*. I went into a theater on Hollywood Boulevard, and during the scene where Linda Blair's head rotates, a Hispanic woman stood up and just started screaming. She ran out screaming 'Dios Mio!', and the whole audience either laughed or screamed along with her, and the hair on the back of my neck stood up. It was so scary just to realize that your hair standing on end was an actual event that could happen. Both times that it's happened to me, it's where you feel like the filmmaker is somebody you'd be afraid to be alone with.

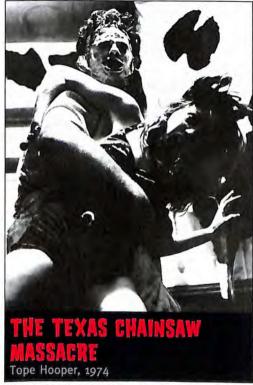
"The Exorcist is just one of those films that gets completely under your skin. I think all of us, especially being raised in a Judeo-Christian country, have that mythology pretty deep within us. That, coupled with the innocence of a child being completely reversed to somebody who is savagely foul-mouthed and clever, in a way that you've never seen in a movie – never even thought they would allow in a movie."



OF THE LIVING DEAD

George A. Romero, 1968

"Night of the Living Dead probably was the first popular horror movie Lever saw Lwas raised in a religious environment that didn't allow going to movies, so I don't have a childhood backlog of seeing horror films. I was in New York trying to get into film, living in a group house in what was kind of the hippie period. Somebody said, 'There's this very funny scary movie called Night of the Living Dead, and I said, 'God, that sounds really cornball," as I was into Bergman and very serious films. We went down to a theater in the Village and it was just packed - a lot of people, it turned out, had already seen it several times. It was first of all very scary, but I was intrigued by the fact that it was funny and scary at the same time, and it had a political statement to make. It wasn't long after that I met a wannabe producer who said, 'Listen, these guys who've been giving money to make movies want a scary movie for their theater chain, and if you write something scary, there's a chance you could direct it and maybe even cut it.' That's how I got into making movies, and I think having seen Night of the Living Dead was a true inspiration, because I had seen it recently and I thought, 'Wow, it's possible to do something that can make a statement and yet is scary."



"What I realized after making my own films for a while was that the scariest character of a horror film has to be the director. When people really get scared is when they think the director is a threat to society. You know, that whoever's made this picture can't be trusted to draw any sort of lines of propriety or decency. You have to cross that line as a filmmaker to really frighten audiences. That's what I felt with The Texas Chainsaw Massacre. It was near the time of Charles Manson and everything, and I thought, 'It must be some Manson gang out in Texas making this picture.' It had kind of a purplish, greenish hue to it, and when you go back and look at it, it's just a beautifully made film with a lot of artistry to it.

"A lot of the stuff in Texas Chainsaw - those little things hanging from trees, and the room with a chicken in a birdcage - was the brilliance of a guy named Bob Burns. who was the production designer. The way I got to know him was that he became production designer on The Hills Have Eyes, and he used a lot of the same skulls and bones."



Steven Spielberg, 1975

"Jaws, I think, is one of Spielberg's most brilliant films. He just pulled out all the stops. He had fantastic studio support. and he took one of the primal things that we're afraid of being pulled down under the surface. And I'm saying that in general terms, because I think that's one of the key things about movies about madness and movies like The Exorcist, is being pulled under the primordial soup into your deep storages that you don't even know or understand anymore. In that sense, Jaws was perfect. And certainly the idea of tooth and claw in nature - even when I designed Freddy Krueger, I very much went back to 'What are the first things that terrified human beings?' I went to claw, he went to tooth, but it's pretty much the same thing."



"I think this was a very powerful film. Most people that mention this part say they love it, but I'm such an animal lover that I found the scenes of the dogs sort of splitting their mouths open very repulsive. But I do think it was a very scary film. I still find the original more chilling - I don't know why, probably because it hearkens back to an earlier naïveté on my part. But I think this was certainly one of John Carpenter's best films by and large, and certainly as he was expanding into larger and larger films, I think it's the best of his larger films."



"Clearly one of the classics. It's Kevin Williamson's favorite movie, obviously referred to heavily in Scream, and it's one of the classic ones of the unstoppable killer that no matter what you do to him, he just keeps coming. I found it a little bit preposterous that he moved so slowly; that was one of the things I've tried to change. But it's difficult to do, because fast-moving killers, if they're in a lot of scenes. drive cameramen crazy. They're always asking you to slow things down - they can't keep them in focus or in frame."



"Alien I loved. It's clearly a big studio film, but I think it had beautiful, beautiful detail, and great acting. And it had obviously one of the great all-time jumps when the thing comes out of his chest. It's a perfectly chosen cast, and the art direction is stunning. I can't tell you how many scripts I've seen with the basic Alien situation of people watching on some little scope seeing the blip coming up behind the guy who's looking for it in the ventilation shaft. It also had some great visual things in it - just the sight of its acid going through deck after deck, that was an incredible visual. Plus the alien passes through you, it incubates inside you, which is a classic human fear - the monster within us. I'm sure that's an ancient fear, too, of parasites and things that get into your gut."



"I found The Shining much more cinematic than scary, in most cases. The scariest thing in The Shining was the notebook where he said, 'All work and no play make Jack a dull boy.' The detail that had been lavished on that one prop, I thought, was just stunning. So many people would have shirked on that, and it obviously took somebody - I don't know, it must have taken weeks to do every single page like that, with different patterns and increasing complexity. It was really chilling. The book was much more terrifying to me, though. I think you felt the terror of the child much more, his fear of the homicidal father. And the slow degradation of the father's sanity into a homicidal maniac, and the family's isolation. A lot of Stephen King's writing is extremely interior, and the average for Stephen King movies that have really succeeded as films is not as high as one might expect. I remember years ago Dino DeLaurentis was trying to get me to do The Mist, and I read it and I said, 'Dino, everything's happening in people's heads!' Then the only thing that really happens is you go out in the parking lot and there's giant crabs running around, which is laughable in a movie."



"The Omen I saw relatively close to the time I saw The Exorcist, so I felt like it was kind of like a more Hollywood version. In general, I found it a bit milder, but it did have one moment in it which I later learned was totally fortuitous. Right about the time David Warner is about to get it, this incredible windstorm came up, and lashed all the trees into these writhing forms, and apparently that was just a freak thing that lasted like, you know, 45 seconds, and went away. Dick (Donner) told me later, 'Yeah, it just came up, and we filmed. We lucked out on that one.' The kid is still very creepy, and some of that tricycle stuff was, I think, stolen by Kubrick."



"A fun scary movie. With Spielberg behind it, they got some terrific effects, especially the rearranging of the furniture, when she turns around and in a split second all the chairs are precariously balanced on each other. That was a great visual moment; a lot of the great moments in these kinds of films come from purely cinematic things. The little child in front of the television set was really creepy, and you know, "They're here' – it had certain classic elements to it that I think were very, very good."



"I think David is one of our true mad geniuses. All of his films are worth seeing. And the early ones that dealt with that fear or repulsion of the body or what's gotten under your skin did it in a way that was quite avant-garde, quite transsexual almost. There were a lot of sexual overtones to it. It was subversive, it was like you see the nightmarish thing come out of the drain of your civilized bathtub. I think he really nailed that horror of the body itself, which is almost like a Williams Burroughs type of insight. Burroughs once said the inspiration for Naked Lunch as a title was just seeing somebody eating a piece of chicken at his lunch table, and realizing that was a piece of flesh on the end of his fork."



"Evil Dead I had a lot of fun with. It wasn't one of the ones that scared me in a disturbing sort of way, but I did think it had tremendous energy. Sam Raimi has that delicious fun with being scary and doing kind of semi-action films too in his scary movies. It was a great fun film, and I actually included a little clip from it in A Nightmare on Elm Street. In the first Nightmare, when Nancy is trying to stay awake, she's watching Evil Dead. I think there was a poster of The Hills Have Eyes in one scene in Evil Dead, so I sort of returned the favor."



A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET Wes Craven, 1984

"I think there was something about Freddy - he was a child molester, there was something lascivious about him, which is just so shocking when you turn toward young people. And as I made it, believe it or not, I was studying this Russian philosopher, Georgi Ivanovich Gurdjieff, who writes a lot about levels of consciousness. The farther up you went toward consciousness, the more painful it was, until the few and far between broke through into the clear conscious, where they were no longer involved egotistically and it was just beauty everywhere. That he called 'complete awakeness.' So the whole idea of Nightmare was built on that assumption that we all have this sense that we're half asleep as to what's really going on, and we all have these sort of mini-epiphanies in our lives. The engine of that picture was an individual's struggle to be conscious. and to face the truth. Also, it was based on a series of newspaper articles about young men dying in their sleep in the middle of horrendous nightmares, so it had that

interesting aspect of having a basis in reality."



"Suspiria didn't get me viscerally; I found it strangely beautiful. I think that was always the thing with Suspiria, that it didn't frighten me in a way because there was so much removal from real lighting textures and so forth. That's never quite appealed to me, that technique, although that little rain of slugs or whatever the hell those little worms were was very chilling. Those little things, you know, are going to be in your body when you die, eating you away, and to have that juxtaposed to a beautiful young girl is very, very frightening. So I think it was certainly notable for great artistry and stylishness, but it didn't get me at a gut level, the same way Texas Chainsaw did."



Alfred Hitchcock, 1960

"I found it very scary, but by the time I actually got around to seeing it, I had seen a lot of more modern films. At some point I said, 'Jesus, I've got to go see Psycho.' I could see how for the time it would be very scary, and there are a couple of things in it, like the guy falling backwards down the stairs, which continues to be a very weird shot. But it didn't have the impact on me that it had on people who saw it early in their life or when it came out. I can remember my mother, who knew zilch about movies in general, talking about it: she said, 'That's made by some evil old man!"

IN LONDON John Landis, 1981

"I think American Werewolf in London was one of the most successful combinations of humor and horror. It had some great special effects, especially with the transformation, but also just the guy walking around with his face falling off and being conversant. Just the fact that he was talking at all, I mean, when you see the guy with his face falling off walk into the room, you say, Oh, he's going to growl or whatever, but then when he starts just having a conversation, it's like, oh my God! I can remember the audience freaking out and laughing and girls holding onto their boyfriends at the same time."



Brian DePalma, 1976

"Carrie I thought was really terrific, acting-wise. Sissy Spacek did an incredible job, and then that image of her at the prom with the pig's blood dumping on her head, it all just came off so perfectly. I think DePalma is able to pull off these montages in his films in a way that's really stunning, and in that one he had a terrific script and fantastic performances, especially by her and by her mother. When I was helping Sean Cunningham with Friday the 13th - he called me in to look at the final cut before it had music and effects in it, it looked slow. He wasn't sure it was going to be scary at all, and he shot some extra footage, I think. And he said, 'I want Carrie. I want them to jump out of their seats."



"I found some parts of that a little bit too close to Nightmare on Elm Street - some of the constructive elements of it - to be totally comfortable with it, but it was a terrific image of the lead villain, Pinhead. It also had an undercurrent of sadomasochism that was very frightening, and in that sense I think it was very innovative."





"Diabolique I saw quite late, but I liked it a lot and I thought it was quite intriguing. I think it's a classic, it's great. You can see the parallels in Fatal Attraction, with the bathtub scene. Bathrooms are creepy, or at least they have the potential for it, because they're so primal. It's one of the few rooms in the house where, especially as a child, you can go and lock yourself in, and it's where bodily functions and bathing and all that very primal stuff takes place."



MISSING SOMETHING?

You'll notice that we included 19 movies, not 20 - that's because we're giving YOU the chance to come up with the 20th and final entry on our definitive list. Write to us at Scary Movies, TOTAL MOVIE, 12121 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90025 to tell us your movie choice, and why you're voting for it. We'll collate the votes and print the winning movie in a future issue, while the first five entries out of the hat win a copy of the Scream Trilogy DVD box set. Yav!



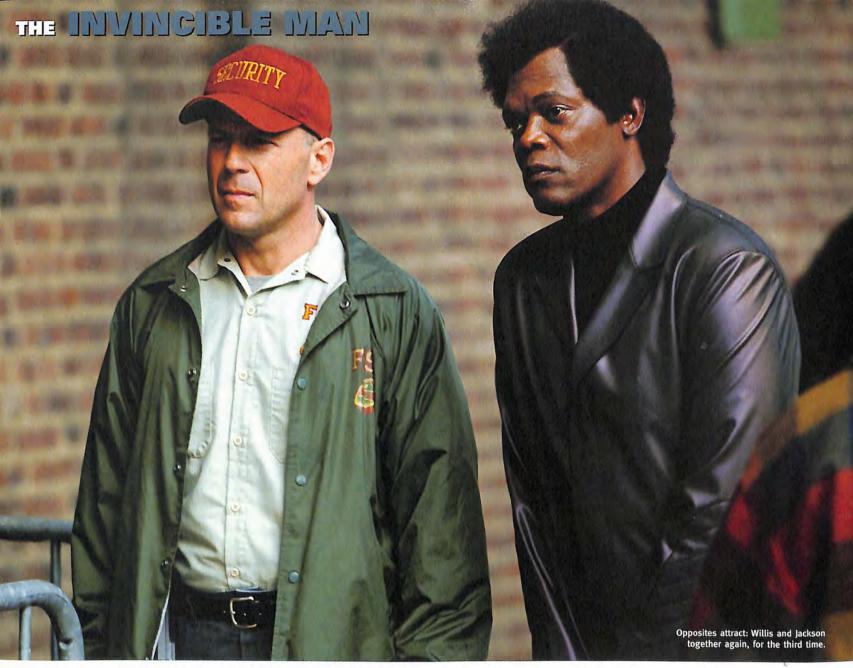


David Dunn (Willis) is examined by a baffled doctor after surviving a train wreck that kills 131 people in *Unbreakable*. We always knew Willis was a tough guy, but this is getting ridiculous...



THE INVINCIBILE MAN

There was one problem facing M. Night Shyamalan and Bruce Willis after *The Sixth Sense* blew audiences and box-office records away – just how the hell do you follow that? We'll find out this November, when Night and Bruce re-team for *Unbreakable*, a new chiller that's promising to be every bit as eerie and surprising as its predecessor. **TOTAL MOVIE** lifts the project's shroud of secrecy for a first look behind the scenes...



hen *The Sixth Sense* was released to practically zero fanfare last summer, it wasted precious little time going from sleeper hit to pop-culture phenomenon. It broke box-office records, made twist endings cool again, nabbed one of its several Oscar nominations for an 11-year-old kid, and brought complete and utter overexposure to a particular line of dialogue that was still in circulation a couple of months ago when it was at the center of the ad campaign for the mega-successful parody *Scary Movie*.

Finally, more than a year later, that's all died down. And now M. Night Shyamalan sees more dead people.

In fact, in his Sixth Sense follow-up Unbreakable, writer-director Shyamalan knocks off 131 people right off the bat: all are victims of a train wreck that leaves a sole survivor. That last man standing is Bruce Willis as David Dunn, who tries to answer the classic question "Why me?" and begins to think the answer may be something pretty amazing.

Even more amazing is the fact that that's nearly all most anybody knows about the plot of this movie. The degree to which the secrets of *Unbreakable* have been closely guarded by everyone involved with the film makes the publicity for *The Sixth Sense* look like it was organized by Linda Tripp. Which is all fine and good, and even a little refreshing in a world where cynically overeager movie trailers can often spoil anything you haven't already figured out about the best new movies long before opening night. But those who have seen the seriously enigmatic trailer (featured on this issue's TOTAL MOVIE DVD) may do a double-take – chilly look, eerie visuals, supernatural something-or-other, and gloomy Bruce – and be expecting something very

similar to Shyamalan's previous hit.

"Just like The Sixth Sense

was not just a horror film,

this is not just a thriller."

- M. Night Shyamalan

They may be in for a surprise. Actually, Shyamalan says he was working on another story that was very similar to *Sixth Sense* while that movie was still in post-production, but ditched it because he didn't want to repeat himself. Instead, his filmmaking team began catching him reading background material on train wrecks and other major accidents, and sure enough, he was on to something new.

"For some reason, the other movie I was working on just didn't seem like the right next step," says Shyamalan. "I wanted to go forward in scope and implications for something

that would really capture the imagination, and this idea lends itself to that. It was a great canvas as opposed to the other idea, which felt like it was very similar to *The Sixth Sense.*"

But while he deliberately chose a more ambitious story to push his own development as a filmmaker, he also wanted to use *Unbreakable* to build on the style that stunned *Sixth Sense* audiences with its stark, haunting look and the way it balanced visual mayhem with the

emotional depth of the characters. "Hopefully it will be sort of signature in that you can tell it is by the same filmmakers – very suspenseful with a lot of twists and turns and emotion – but with a whole new story and excitement," says Shyamalan.

BREAKING UP IS HARD TO DO

That goal of creating something different and yet familiar got a big boost from the fact that much of the same crew from Shyamalan's previous hit was asked back for *Unbreakable*. And the main role was written with Willis in mind, even though the director

hadn't talked to him about the part. But when the script was finally done, it turned out to be beside the point as far as Willis was concerned - he liked working on Sixth Sense so much that he took Unbreakable without even reading the script.

"In many ways, he was like a mirror in The Sixth Sense for everyone else to look into and for him to react," says Shyamalan of Willis. "In Unbreakable, I gave him the chance to show a larger spectrum with a much deeper character. He does an incredible job showing everything from the imbalance of the relationship between his wife and son with some wonderfully warm and funny moments, to the intense, dramatic action sequences...so you get the full roundness of all the things he can do."

But there was one more actor the suddenly sought-after Shyamalan had in mind while writing his new film: Samuel L. Jackson. Willis and Jackson had, of course, worked together in Pulp Fiction and most recently in Die Hard With a Vengeance, but it wasn't just those previous teamings that made him seek out Sam. What sealed the deal, it turns out, was Jackson's performance in one of the actor's most obscure films, The Red Violin. Apparently, something about the sadness in the actor's eves in the scene where he watches a violinist playing the title instrument struck a chord with the director and made him think that quality of emotion would be perfect for Unbreakable. And if he wanted that particular look, he knew what he had to do. "You can't ask somebody to act like Sam Jackson," says Shyamalan. "If you want Sam

Jackson, you hire Sam Jackson.'

The importance of Jackson's presence in the film is also clear from the trailer. He plays the mysterious stranger who first springs the supernatural possibilities of his miraculous survival on Willis' character. In an interesting contrast to David Dunn's ability to walk away from an utter disaster without a scratch, Jackson's character Elijah Price has a rare genetic bone disorder called osteogenesis imperfecta that has caused him 54 broken bones since birth. He thinks Dunn's "gift" may hold the answers that his own situation has left him searching for throughout his life, and so he pushes him to discover the truth about who he is.

Shyamalan on the Unbreakable set:

"I wanted to go forward in scope.

According to Shyamalan, Willis and Jackson fit into the roles just as snugly as he'd hoped when he was writing the film, and their history together paid off, as well.

"When I was thinking about putting Bruce and Sam together, I remembered how electric they had both been in Pulp Fiction and Die Hard with a Vengeance," he says. "The chemistry is great between them in those movies and is even more exceptionally so in Unbreakable. They totally go at it and it's wonderful to watch the sparks fly between them when they are acting in a scene together."

SPENCER: FOR HIRE

With The Sixth Sense building toward an eventual \$260 million domestic box-office take, and Willis and Jackson both signed on, you can imagine how fast Unbreakable got the green light. But Shyamalan still had a unique casting challenge: hiring a child actor for the role of Dunn's son, Joseph.

Even before Sixth Sense, the director had a good track record with kids. His second feature, Wide Awake, was about a 10-year-old who goes on a search for God, and he earned himself attention for putting the talented Joseph Cross in the starring role and leading the young actor through a fantastic performance.

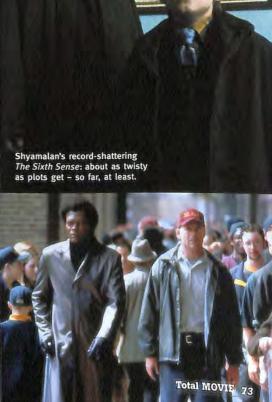
But it was Haley Joel Osment as Cole Sear in The Sixth Sense who not only stole the show, but linked Shyamalan to a certain degree to sympathetic and realistic portrayals of kids. Even though Unbreakable was a much smaller role, it was clear that whoever took over the kiddle corner this time around was going to have some giant tiny shoes to fill. Amazingly. Shyamalan got it right the first time - or at least he ended up going with the first actor he auditioned, 12-year-old Spencer Treat Clark. The director knew it was going to be a challenge. "I'm sure it was kind of daunting for him, having a gigantically huge standard to live up to," Shyamalan says. "But Spencer has given a stunning performance

in scene after scene and is truly a fine young actor."

For his part, Clark learned that the things that he liked about working with Shyamalan were the very things the director received praise for on his previous film. "Night knows precisely what he wants, and knows exactly how much direction to give you in a scene," says Clark. "He told me from day one, 'If it doesn't feel real, don't do it...because if it doesn't feel real to you now, then it won't feel real later when I'm editing."

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

How Unbreakable came together is important and all, but what Shyamalan and everyone else involved with the movie have danced around extremely carefully through the whole process of making it is what it's really about. The central mystery, of course, is what the concept of someone being "unbreakable" really means. It's an especially shrewd term because it seems obvious on the surface. implying some kind of invincibility or ability to avoid physical danger. But in the world of M. Night Shyamalan, it's impossible to tell





what kind of supernatural angle this involves without actually seeing the movie (or getting ahold of the script, which some have managed to do).

Some of the best clues come from the movie's web site, www.areyouunbreakable.com. Still, these aren't exactly straightforward clues: one large section of the site cleverly hints at the answer by offering profiles of people who may have been "unbreakable." As you can probably guess, the cross-section is pretty eclectic; here are a handful of examples from the site, the first one at least being a recognizable real person:

* Edward Shackleton, the British explorer who tried and failed to become the first person to reach the South Pole from 1914-1917. "The survival test that Shackleton and his men passed during those years is nothing short of Unbreakable," says the site. What this refers to is the fact that Shackleton and his crew survived for nine months on an ice floe while their ship was trapped in the ice near Antarctica. They later discovered their ship had been crushed, set off in small boats, took shelter on Elephant Island, had to escape when the ice around them cracked, and set up camp on another ice floe. At that point, Shackleton braved the waters on a 20-foot whaleboat with five of his men in order to get help.

"Hopefully it will be sort of signature in that you can tell it's by the same filmmakers – very suspenseful with a lot of twists and turns and emotion."

- M. Night Shyamalan

* Clark Pico, according to the site, is the world champion of VHA, or Vertical Human Acceleration, who broke the world height record for catapult aerials in 1993 with a launch that shot him 96 feet over the Mississippi River outside of St. Louis. Though he unknowingly ruptured his spleen and began bleeding internally after a bad landing during a shoot for ABC Sports, he continued to film, logging 15 launches in just under two hours, and then going into cardiac arrest. He was hospitalized and recovered quickly, and continues in the sport to this day. According to the site, Clark has had six broken wrists, four fractured teeth, broken ribs, a punctured lung, and three broken collarbones, among several other injuries.

* On a pair of experimental oil derricks in the Periera Sound, a technician named only as "Blaven" was leading a welding team when a fire touched off a chain explosion, which erupted into a half-mile-high cordon of flame. "Due to the resulting shock wave, the communications boat was sent flying by the explosion as if it had been carried cross-state by a tornado," says the site. Blaven was the only survivor, sustaining a quarter-inch-deep laceration across his head but returning to work within three months.

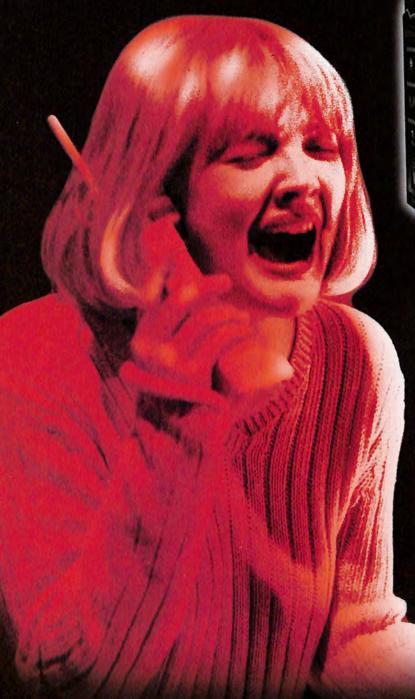
So what's it all mean? What does it take to be unbreakable? Shyamalan has clearly been reluctant to give anything away, focusing instead on the implications of the story and tying it into his own struggle for meaning in his life. "When I wasn't making films, I used to wake up in the morning with a little bit of sadness, and I didn't want to feel that my whole life," he says. "So there was a point where I just listened carefully and figured out what I wanted to do. And now, even though that feeling of sadness still comes and goes every once in a while, I feel an incredible sense of peace because I feel like I am doing what I am supposed to do. And that is what this movie is really about – discovering your destiny and asking yourself questions like 'What am I supposed to be doing with my life?' – and how the pieces of your life somehow seem to

fall into place and make sense when you find the answer."

Okay, but are we going to see dead people, or what? Well, *Unbreakable* clearly steers away from the scare angle; this time the trademark eerie story has been worked into a "suspense action-thriller" format. But then again, would you call *The Sixth Sense* a horror movie? No, with his distinctive style of storytelling, Shyamalan is definitely promising more. "Just like *The Sixth Sense* was not *just* a horror film," he says, "this is not *just* a thriller."

Unbreakable opens on November 22

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SCREAMING INTO STORES SEPTEMBER 26TH!







Beverly Hills Cop. Top Gun. The Rock. Crimson Tide. Bad Boys. Con Air. Enemy of the State, Armageddon.

Yup, you could say JERRY BRUCKHEIMER knows a thing or two about action films. Now, the modern era's pre-eminent producer of hard-core, testosterone-fueled, balls-tothe-wall guy movies is branching out with the sports biopic Remember the Titans, and next summer's \$135m WWII mega-epic Pearl Harbor. Taking time out from blowing the crap out of Hawaii, he tells Gary Whitta, "I make films for the common man - and they love 'em."

THE PATRIO

ne thing you can say for sure about Jerry Bruckheimer – he knows how to blow things up real good. Since the mid-1980s he's been blowing up cars, buses, fighter planes, submarines, houses, skyscrapers, space shuttles – hell, even entire cities – all in the name of good ol' fashioned movie entertainment. Alongside Joel Silver, Bruckheimer ranks as the world's biggest, baddest and most prolific action movie producer. When he's not destroying stuff on set, he's laying waste to box-office records – his films have grossed more than \$3.2 billion combined - and he's just getting started.

A native of Detroit, Bruckheimer graduated with a degree in psychology from the University of Arizona, and worked his way up in advertising, from the mailroom of a Madison Avenue agency to eventually directing his own award-winning commercials. Teaming up with his then-housemate Don Simpson to make movies, they produced a low-budget flick called *Flashdance*... and the rest is Hollywood history. Simpson infamously lived himself to death (the stories of drugs'n'hookers are well documented) and died during the filming of *The Rock* in 1996 – Bruckheimer has been

flying solo since then, and currently has a whole slew of movies coming down the pipe, including next summer's Memorial Day monster *Pearl Harbor*. Somewhere between set visits, exec-producing his soundtrack albums and rapping with Will Smith, he found some time to sit down with TOTAL MOVIE...

TOTAL MOVIE: What did you think of the movies we saw this summer?

BRUCKHEIMER: I think audiences are being

entertained. I liked Mission: Impossible 2, I liked Me Myself & Irene, I loved Gladiator.

Are there any trends you've noticed developing through the kind of summer movies we've been seeing lately?

It's hard. As filmmakers we're trying to do something unique and different all the time. Studios would much rather be safe by doing sequels – they feel much more comfortable that way. But I don't believe in trends.

What's your opinion of sequels? You've only ever produced one, to Beverly Hills Cop.

I think if audiences are really entertained by a movie, they want to see it again. And if you can give them that same experience again, that's great. We have only done one sequel, but we are developing a few and I hope they come about. I'd love to get Martin Lawrence and Will Smith back together again.

"We had 80 Pearl Harbor survivors come to the set in Mexico. A lot of them cried. They said it was scary, how real it was." Do you have a stricter criteria about what sequels to make than with original movies? Yeah. We're not planning sequels for *The Rock* or *Armageddon* – at least not currently.

You've often said that movies should be all about story, but you obviously believe that movies should also be about spectacle.

Right, I like things that are in your face. But then I like small stories too. There's a range to what I enjoy doing.

Are you ever going to peak in terms of the amount of spectacle you can deliver an audience?

Never. As the technology and the creative mind expands, and as new Spielbergs and Lucases get brought up, that spectacle will always be there. There's a lot more money in Hollywood than there is talent, so it's about finding that talent. And technically we can do things now that we couldn't do just five years ago. The kind of things that George Lucas has been doing, and what we're doing with *Pearl Harbor*, is really stretching the envelope. *The Matrix* stretched it even further. It's exciting because every day you're learning something new. I thrive on it.

After working as a movie producer for so long, do you still consider yourself a movie fan?

Oh, I love it. Every free moment I have, I try to run to see a film. My favorite days are when I can catch three.

Do you just go out to the theater like a regular Joe?

Yeah, I won't watch movies on tape. I don't have a screening room at home, all I have is a projection TV, and that's it. I'm at the theater with everybody else.

Do you think that helps you keep up with audiences, and what they want to see?

Absolutely. I don't know what audiences want – I'll never know what they want. I just gotta please myself. When you see a lot of films, it's like going to school. To see what works and what doesn't work with an audience, it's educating.

What makes you want to go see a movie?

I'll see anything that I've heard good things about. Word of mouth's very important to me, and to any audience. And there has to be some interesting element – *Gladiator*, I had to go see right away. That's a movie I wish I had made. Ultimately, you just want to go on a ride. You want to get away from normal life and forget about all your problems, and get lost in a film. And that's what we try to do.

What are your personal favorite movies?

One of my personal favorite filmmakers is David Lean. I loved *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Bridge on the River Kwai* – great movie! And Scorcese – I love *Raging Bull*. The *Godfather* movies. *The French Connection*.

Ever try to work with any of those directors you admire as a moviegoer?

I haven't yet, because they're usually booked. But I'd like to someday. You never know.

Your movies often get a tough ride from critics, but they're always popular with audiences. Do you think that the "pros" who write about movies are out of touch with what everyday movie fans want to see?

I can't comment on what reviewers do and don't like. I make films for audiences, for the common man. And they love 'em. I've spoken to kids who've seen *Gone in 60 Seconds* three or four times, and that was after it had





Denzel Washington calls the plays in Remember the Titans. "It's going to really surprise you," says Bruckheimer, "especially coming from what we've done in the past."

been out for just a few weeks. They tell me it's one of their favorite movies. That's a validation. You read the reviews and you think, "What movie did they see that these kids aren't seeing?" But I don't know the reviewer's background - maybe they came from an Ivy League college and they're very rarified in what they like. They go into these movies with an attitude, and I think that's a part of it. The kind of film I make, for whatever reason, isn't on their radar.

Does it bother you that critics seem to reach a formative opinion about one of your films before they've seen it?

Yeah, it's tough. When I made Enemy of the State, Harvey Weinstein said to me, "Had your name not been on it, it would've gotten much better reviews." Because reviewers expect something else, and they come in with a chip on their shoulders.

Doesn't that pull your chain?

I can't change it. I just gotta keep doing what I'm doing, and deal with it. That's life.

Do you read the reviews of your movies?

No. I don't go seeking them out, let's put it that way. If I see one with a nasty headline, I'll move on. The important thing to me is that I can still make movies. The validation I get is from the public. That's what's important. And the movies I make support a lot of other filmmakers, who are desperate to make smaller movies. When we have big successes, it leaves money on the table for other filmmakers to make the little pictures that the critics might respond to. It's a big circle.

What responsibilities do you believe you have as a filmmaker?

To entertain an audience. That's number one. They pay money - at least nine dollars now in certain cities - and they want their money's worth. That's my job, to make sure they get entertained.

There's a certain kind of visual sheen to all your films over the past several vears, in the way everything's lit, shot and edited. At first I thought it was a

Michael Bay thing, but you see the same visual flair in Con Air and Enemy of the State and Gone in 60 Seconds, too, which leads me to wonder: is that you? It's the choices I make with directors. It's not radio, it's film, so I gravitate toward directors with a strong visual style.

Dominic Sena, Simon West, Tony Scott and Michael Bay are all very strong

How are their styles different?

"I don't look at my movies

again, once they're out the door.

Only because I'd want to change

them. 'How'd I miss that?'

It'd drive me nuts."

Tony comes out of the '70s and '80s so he uses a lot more backlight, a lot more smoke and confusion. Dominic likes to play with color a lot. He also believes in big master shots - he doesn't like to get in too tight, while Tony likes everything up-close and tight. Bay has a more

whimsical style. He's got a wonderful sense of humor, and likes to use a lot of different lenses. really wide lenses and interesting angles.

Tell us about Remember the Titans.

It's a true story. It happened in Virginia in the early 1970s. It's just a story that had to be told it's about triumph of the spirit, and how a football coach who came from South Carolina went into Virginia, a very delicate racial situation, and really transformed a community. What they did was, they took a white high school and a black high

school and combined them, and that's the first time it'd ever happened. White schools only played white schools and black schools only played black schools, and they just didn't co-mingle. Herman Boone came in there, and when they combined these two high schools, they jumped him over the winningest football coach in Virginia history and made him his assistant. So tempers were flaring - white kids refused to play for a black coach or with black players. And he handled that situation in an amazing way, and we tell that story in the movie, how he accomplished what he did. When you see the movie

BRUCKHEIMER

The man himself takes TOTAL MOVIE readers on a tour through scenes from his blockbusting career...



AMERICAN GIGOLO (1980)

Paul Schrader's a real artist, and this was the first picture I made that was really successful. It changed the way people dressed. It came in at a period when everyone was in denims and jeans, and people started wearing ties and jackets again. It made a very famous designer out of Georgio Armani.



BEVERLY HILLS COP

'Marty Brest was really responsible for that. He had the humor and the foresight to know when to let Eddie Murphy go, and when to rein him in. He has a great instinct for humor and drama.



forever for Tom Cruise to commit to. It was a terrific script, but that didn't convince him. So we sent him down to El Centro where the Rangers were flying, and got them to take him for a ride, because we couldn't get him to say yes. So he gets up in this A-6 and he just had the best time. When he got down he went straight to a phone booth and called me up and said, 'I'll do the movie.'



BEVERLY HILLS COP II (1987)

"Axel Foley's a great character, and people love seeing Eddie Murphy work. I wanted him to do it again. and he wanted to do it again. We were lucky to get Tony Scott because it's very difficult to get a good director on a sequel - especially somebody of Tony's caliber."



DAYS OF THUNDER (1990)

"It's something Tom Cruise came to us with. We brought in Robert Towne to develop the script, and Tom's been working with him ever since. We were re-writing it the whole way through. We never quite got a handle on where we were going, but it turned out to be very successful."



BAD BOYS (1995)

"Will Smith's agent sent him over to my office and I instantly thought, this kid's a movie star. I'd only ever seen one or two episodes of The Fresh Prince; I had no idea about the show. But when I interviewed him he was charming, he's funny, he's handsome, and he's got good acting ability. I wanted to put him together with somebody, and a Columbia executive said, what about Martin Lawrence? Martin read the title Bad Boys and said he didn't even need to open the page. So that's how that came together. It took us three or four years. We originally had Dana Carvey and Jon Lovitz, and it was a very different film. It would have been more comedic."



it's going to really surprise you, especially coming from what we've done in the past - the movie just sneaks up on you. It's funny, and it's really emotional.

What is it about sports movies?

I love the competition and the camaraderie. That pertains to everything you do. But I think Titans is more of a people movie, a character movie. I think audiences around the world will understand what's going on, even though it's about football.

But you've got to have the big game at the end where the good guys win in the final second, right? It's got elements of that in there too, because that's how it happened. We keep it very dramatic. That last game is very interesting.

"I don't make documentaries. The way we lead our lives ninety percent of the time is boring. so you've got to look for the moments of real drama. Pearl Harbor is a tough one for us because we don't want to make a history lesson, but you have to remain fairly close to what went on."

Do you feel like you have an added responsibility when you're making a movie based on a true story? Yes, definitely. We try to approach it in a very delicate fashion. But I don't make documentaries. The way we lead our lives ninety percent of the time is boring, so you've got to look for the moments of real drama. We try to inject that drama while remaining true to the characters. Pearl Harbor is a tough one for us because we don't want to make a history lesson, but you have to remain fairly close to what went on.

Are movies like Remember the Titans and Coyote Ugly a conscious effort to change people's ideas about what they should expect from "A Jerry Bruckheimer Film"?

Sure. I like all kinds of movies. And I have to do what my heart tells me to do. I can't wait to go see Coyote Ugly and Remember the Titans. Titans is a lot of what you liked about Dead Poets Society. It has that kind of feeling to it.

It seems like you're branching out into making two different types of movies the big action rides, and the smaller, more personal films.

Definitely. We have a story we've been trying to make for a long time about Veronica Guerin, the Irish journalist who was killed. So we have those



small pictures which we champion, and then we have huge spectacles like Pearl Harbor.

How did Pearl Harbor come about?

An executive at Disney had an idea about two brothers who fall in love with the same nurse against the backdrop of Pearl Harbor. We changed the brothers to best friends, and we brought in Randall Wallace, who wrote Braveheart, and Michael Bay.

People are going to look at this movie, a love story set against the backdrop of a huge historical disaster, and say: "Bruckheimer's trying to pull a Titanic!" What do you say to that? I hope so! I hope we do as well.

But would this movie be getting made if it weren't for the huge success of Titanic? I think it would be, based on our track records.

Bay has one of the best investment-to-return track records in the movie business. Every time, he increases the profits for the studios.

When did Michael Bay get involved?

He developed it with us from the original idea. working closely with Randall and myself on the





mapped out all the battle scenes. And he got caught up in the emotion of it, especially when he went to Pearl Harbor and saw the plagues of the names of the men who died there. And I don't care what country you're from - when you get on the Arizona Memorial, which is sunk with eleven hundred men still trapped inside. it's a very emotional experience. We feel a lot of weight and responsibility to veterans and the men who lost their lives protecting their

country. Pearl Harbor was the gateway to beating Hitler and keeping the free world free. Don't forget, the British were having a hard time. Lend-lease was going on, Churchill definitely wanted us in the war, and Pearl Harbor really helped to hasten that. Prior to that, America had been an isolationist.

At \$135 million, Pearl Harbor is the highest-budget movie ever to be greenlighted by a studio, right? That's not true. The Hollywood Reporter wrote that, but it's not true. There have been a number of pictures greenlighted at higher budgets, but nobody will admit that.

But at least your most expensive movie ever, surely.

Armageddon was a little bit more, to be honest with you. It was around that range

So how are things going with production?

We're better than halfway through the movie. We've finished the Hawaii part of it, blowing up the ships and the planes flying between the ships. And we just finished the Mexico part, which could've really gotten out of hand that's where Cameron got in a lot of trouble with Titanic. We did the rolling-over of the USS Oklahoma there. We built a 100-foot section of the battleship, almost to scale, on a gimbal. It's enormous. We also built a portion of the West Virginia. That's where it could have gone crazy, but we've done that now. So - knock on wood - the hard part, all the most dangerous stuff, is finished.

"We feel a lot of responsibility to veterans and the men who lost their lives protecting their country. Pearl Harbor was the gateway to beating Hitler and keeping the free world free."

Why do all the big explosive stuff first?

Because it's the hardest thing to deal with. You want to get it out of the way so that you can calm down and do everything else

What's exciting you most about Pearl Harbor right now?

It's just so emotional. We had 80 survivors come to the set in Mexico. We showed them the teaser trailer and a lot of them cried. They were there when we rolled the Oklahoma. We showed them some of the footage and they said it was like they were back in Pearl Harbor on the day of the attack. They had never seen anything as real as that. They said it was scary, how real it was

CRIMSON TIDE (1995)

Crimson Tide was developed internally here. It took a long time to get the script right. We convinced Tony Scott to direct it, although he wanted a rewrite and since he had just finished True Romance, he wanted Quentin Tarantino to do it. Quentin was in the midst of all these festivals, and it was three weeks before shooting before Quentin finally got to it and turned in his script. He'd really embellished the characters, and that made Tony happy.'

DANGEROUS MINDS (1995)

This was something for me, because I felt that we had lost a generation of kids. I wanted to restore the teaching profession as people who care about educating children and making them better people. And movies do that they make heroes out of people. Again, a true story, which is always more interesting than fiction. And we got lucky, we got that Coolio song which elevated it to a more general audience. We made it for \$20 million and it did \$80 million here and over \$100 million foreign, so it was a huge picture."

THE ROCK (1996)

"We had just finished Crimson Tide. Caravan Pictures came to us with the script because they felt that Don Simpson and I were much better at doing this kind of genre picture. So we read the script and restructured it to make it much more interesting.

CON AIR (1997)

"It started with an article in the Wall Street Journal or New York Times about how the US Marshal service transported prisoners around the country, and how they called it Con Air. Disney sent it over to us to work on. We brought in Scott Rosenberg to rework the plot. And when we got stuck we brought in Jonathan Hensleigh. Scott writes great characters and understands dialogue, and John gave us some of the outrageous moments.'

ARMAGEDDON (1998)

"It was a great idea. A big spectacle movie. They got Deep Impact out first, but I knew ours would be as good, if not better."

ENEMY OF THE STATE (1998)

'We had developed that for a long time. That was a Don Simpson idea, about the government coming in and destroying your past. Aaron Sorkin came in and helped us get the script to where Will and the studio was happy with it. Will flipped over it.

GONE IN 60 SECONDS (2000)

An executive at Disney came to me he'd just got the rights to Gone in 60 Seconds. I'd seen the original movie back in 1974, when it was first released, and thought it was a lot of fun. We tried to make ours our own original."

















What are you doing to make sure that the kind of people who take this all very seriously - like the survivors - are satisfied with the way you're portraying it?

I don't think they will ever be satisfied. It can't be done. The movie would have to be eight hours long in order to make them happy. We had somebody who was offended that we used an American battleship and put a Japanese flag on it. But we're always going to get that kind of stuff. We're going to make an entertaining movie and let the audience

decide. And we have a number of historians who work with us. We're also working with the government, and with the survivors. What's interesting is that none of them can agree. The survivors will tell you one story, and the historians will say that never happened, even though the survivors swear it did. And the government has a whole different perspective on what went on. For example, there's a character named Kimmel, who was the admiral at Pearl Harbor who was thrown out of the Navy because they felt he wasn't prepared. And now the Navy's trying to bring him back because they're saying he was unfairly discharged. There are two or three sides to every story. There's a book that just came out which claims that Roosevelt knew about the attack. That's all bullshit. He didn't know about the attack! They knew that the Japanese fleet was missing and that they were going to attack

somewhere, but they didn't have a clue where. They weren't sure if it was the Solomon Islands, if it was Borneo or Midway. They didn't know! Do you think Roosevelt wanted his entire fleet destroyed? I don't think so. It took away his ability to wage war.

How do you approach a story like *Pearl Harbor*, which is essentially a downer? It's like *Titanic* – we know that the boat sinks, that the Americans get pounded at Pearl Harbor.

I think we give you something at the end which gives you an emotional uplift. It's something that happened four months later which I'm not going to talk about, but it'll give the story a little bump.

You've had problems in the past with getting cooperation from the government and the military when making *The Rock* and *Con Air* because they didn't approve of the material. How are you doing this time?

Great. We went to Washington and met with the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Navy. most of the heads of the Army and Air Force. We showed them the script, showed them the animatic that Michael shot and his drawings which set the scope of the picture, and they signed on. They're willing to cooperate if they feel it's good for them. And this picture is good for them because it reminds the American people of an event in our history which was seminal for the free world. When I talk about Pearl Harbor to anyone, they have no idea what went on! I was with a woman yesterday who was Ivy League-educated – extremely smart – and when I mentioned Pearl Harbor, she said, "Oh, was that the atomic bomb?" They don't even know the basics! They don't realize what happened at Pearl Harbor. That's why all of the armed services want this movie. They want to educate kids on their history. So they gave us notes on our script, and we implemented what we could.

I've heard that Randall Wallace and Michael Bay didn't see eye to eye on many aspects of the script.

In any creative process, there's give and take. Michael has a very strong point of view, and so does Randall. But they got along great, and it turned out really well. It's

THE PATRIOT

Randall's screenplay. But he had another project that he wants to get made that he's working very hard on. He wants to direct again, and he wanted to focus on that.

How difficult has it been to balance the respect you have to have for *Pearl Harbor*'s historical subject, while entertaining the same audiences who liked *Armageddon*?

It is difficult, and I think we're going to walk that line. You've gotta make what's dramatically interesting. What you don't want to do is bore the audience. This is not something for the History Channel.

How many movies do you have cooking at any one time?

There's always four or five that are sitting on the launchpad, then maybe another 20 that are in some stage of development.

You're planning to make a movie based on the Mark Bowden best-seller Black Hawk Down. What's up with that?

It's another true military story. It's about Mogadishu, Somalia. We had a major disaster there – lost a bunch of men. It's the heroic real-life story of these men, and what a mess we got into. I think stories like *Pearl Harbor* and *Black Hawk Down* are really lessons that if you don't know history, you're doomed to repeat it.

Who's doing Black Hawk Down for you?

Simon West, who directed Con Air, originally brought it to us. He's off doing Tomb Raider over in England now. Ken Nolan's writing the script for us. I hope to get that going this year.

In Gone in 60 Seconds, the two baddest-ass characters are the mute toughguy Sphinx, and the bad guy Raymond Calitri - both British characters played by British actors. What is it about the Brits that makes them such good on-screen bastards?

You know what it is? They're just not exposed over here. Anybody who has those kind of strong features is used up on television. That's why I always go to Europeans.

Check out the

trailer for Pearl

Harbor - a full two

minutes of battleship-blastin',

Affleck-tastic WWII action...

"I talked to Will Smith yesterday,

he's very excited about doing Bad

Boys 2. I think it's the first time

that it's been realistic, because

of Will's enthusiasm."

theatrical teaser

Are we really going to see Bad Boys 2 someday?

Both guys want to do it. I talked to Will Smith yesterday, he's very excited about doing it, but we don't have a screenplay we're happy with yet. We hope to bring another writer on in the next ten days.

Is it realistic that it's going to happen at this point? I think it is. I think it's the first time that it has been realistic, because of Will's enthusiasm.

You're known for using a lot of different writers on your movies. Have you ever just gotten a script that was ready to be filmed, that didn't need fixing?

It's never happened. At least it's never happened to me. *Top Gun* and *Beverly Hills Cop*, when we got them, we knew they were really close. But movies are a collaborative medium. You get a script that you like a lot, you give it to a director and he's got things he wants to

change. The studio's got things they don't like. You give it to an actor, he looks at his character and thinks it doesn't have enough depth or good enough dialogue. So you're constantly reworking it. You've got to keep a single vision, and that's our job, to make sure that the ship doesn't drift off course. When you saw all those early Hollywood movies that you loved – they went through so many typewriters you can't even imagine. The first guy who got the script was somebody who handled the plot. He took the story and outlined it. Then they bring in the character writers, then the

dialogue people show up, then they bring a woman in to give the woman's point of view, then they have punch-up artists who come in to "punch up" the script at the end.

Do you have good relationships with the writers you work with? Some. On the whole, they all come back.

With hindsight, is there anything you would have done differently with any of your movies?

Every one of them. That's why I don't look at them again, once they're out the door. I'll go watch them in the theater with the audience to get their reaction, but that's it.

So the last time you saw, say, The Rock, was in 1996?

Exactly. Only because I'd want to change it. "How'd I miss that?" It'd drive me nuts.

*Remember the Titans is released on September 29 Pearl Harbor hits theaters Memorial Day next year.

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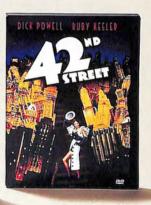
Too many classics on DVD to show them all. Which explains the mysterious omission of "Police Academy 4: Citizens on Patrol".

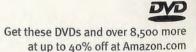












drama science fiction & fantasy action & adventure comedy kids & family anime fitness classics documentary music & musicals the dvd & video stores art house & international horror & suspense award winners television and more



BY FAR THE WORLD'S COOLEST HOME ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

Issue One - October/November 2000

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Everything you need to know to make sweet love to your DVD player. Figuratively speaking, of course.



THE REVENGE OF SPINAL TAP

As the Brit metal legends release a definitive DVD version of their classic "rockumentary," Steve Palopoli is granted an exclusive audience with chief Tapster David St. Hubbins...

egendary English rockers Spinal Tap were none L too happy with director Marty DiBergi back in 1984 when they saw the finished version of This is Spinal Tap, his documentary - if you will, rockumentary about their troubled Smell The Glove tour. But the craziest thing happened: fans old and new loved the movie, and over the last 16 years, it's become one of the most revered rock flicks of all time. Now, MGM is releasing This is Spinal Tap on Special Edition DVD, with a new digital transfer of the film, a new mix of the music, over an hour of deleted scenes and additional material, and most importantly, a commentary from the Tap trio themselves. We caught up with lead singer David St. Hubbins, who is happier than a dancing dwarf that the band's side of the This is Spinal Tap story can finally be told...

TOTAL MOVIE: I have to admit I was a little surprised to hear that the band was going back into the studio to work on this DVD. When This Is Spinal Tap first came out, you guys clearly felt that Marty DiBergi had betrayed you.

DAVID ST. HUBBINS: Well, "betrayed" is really le mot juste, or ... well, I don't know it in any other language, sorry. "Betrayed" would have been the word we would

have used had we not stumbled initially on the phrase "stabbed us in the back." That's how we felt. We felt that he came on like the biggest fan of our music in the world, and he came off making us look like the tour wasn't 100 percent successful. Now, all right, no tour is 100 percent successful, but I would say easily 45 percent of our shows went off without a hitch, and there were very few disasters. And the cancellations - of course, when you go from a 60-city tour to a 28-city tour, which is not exactly what happened in this case, but those things do happen, and all you do is grin and bear it. It's part of being a rock-and-roller, but instead it made it look like we were unsuccessful. We actually came out a bit ahead, thanks to deficit financing

How were you convinced to come back to This Is Spinal Tap and record commentary for the DVD?

For the DVD release, of course, there is an alternative track, on which you will hear our opinions and our thoughts about the "film-maker" - quote-unquote, hyphen in the middle - Marty DiBergi, and how he "done us wrong," in the words of Mae West.

Were there other aspects of putting together the

DVD that you found vindicating?

There's some extra footage on the DVD, and I'm glad we got ahold of this, because it shows that we didn't crumple when Nigel left. We tried to go on, we tried to soldier on, and we did hire briefly a very talented young man who came in to sort of do what Nigel did - play a lot of the guitar and you know, preen for the fans and all that. We only did one performance with Ricky - I'm not legally able to say his last name, due to his probate court still being in session - but I'm glad we included it.

There was no sore spot about that with Nigel, since he's now back with the band?

Oh no, no, he's been back and gone a dozen times since 1982. Yeah, God, this was a long time ago. You know, we were old then

I know Spinal Tap did a new mix of the music for the film, but was the band involved with supervising the transfer of the film onto DVD?

Only the music end. Visuals is not really our thing, you know. I think we're all behind the curve there, as far as those "professionals" who work with those "computers" and all those "film-improving vats." They're great technicians.

DVD news

we're not. Well, not in that, anyway. But we did work on it, Derek and I. And Nigel to a lesser extent, because he's been traveling a lot. And everywhere he goes, he picks up some strange ailment. He came back from the Indonesian islands with a polyp.

Were you pretty adamant that the sound on the DVD be in Dolby Digital 5.1?

You know what, that's a question for Walter Becker (of Steely Dan). I think Walter really understands this crap, and I don't.

5.1! I'm thinking, well, I'm still on the Commodore 128, you know?

Now that you've had a chance to give your side of the story on the commentary track, can you say that this is finally a film that's truly representative of the band?

I think taken along with the alternative track. I mean, everyone should watch the film again when they buy it, and I think if

only half the people who buy Titanic on DVD buy our DVD... well, that would be great. That was the only point I wanted to make, was that that would be wonderful. But anyway. I think that you get the film, and you watch it with the original soundtrack, then you watch it one time through with us doing the commentary, then you watch the added footage. If you do things in that order, everything will become clear. And not just everything about us, but everything about the universe.

Is it sort of like when you sync up The Wizard of Oz with Pink Floyd's Dark Side of the Moon?

Ohhh, I had the wrong one! I was playing the wrong Pink Floyd - I was playing The Wall. And I thought, "Oh God, there's this whole long bit after the movie's over!" I'm going to have to try that again.

For some "special editions," such as the Star Wars trilogy, the filmmakers have added computer graphics that weren't in the original release. Were you tempted to digitally enhance any of the scenes with CGI, for instance the "Stonehenge" sequence? No, no, a documentary's a bit different. Although we did

seriously consider - and I believe it was Nigel who brought it up - digitally doctoring some of the more attractive girls in the film so that they were always naked. At first I recoiled, of course, because it would be exploiting women. Then I

> thought, no, it's exploiting computer-created women! It's really not exploiting anyone! Except us.

And what have computers ever done for us, isn't that what you're saying?

Exactly, I think it's time they treated us to a quickie.

Not to bring up a touchy subject, but is there any backwards masking on the DVD? No. Derek, who is sort of a

lapsed Satanist, he used to promote doing that. On one of our tunes, I think it was "Christmas With the Devil," you could actually hear Derek saying "Hi kids, I'm the Devil. Remember to brush your teeth twice a day, and be careful crossing streets." He wanted to show that the words of the Devil weren't necessarily threatening or evil. I think we actually did put it on, and we just mixed it down low. We tell him it's still there, and he's too lazy to go back

But there's nothing like that on the DVD?

No, not this time. Listen, I'm a proponent of forward masking.

Really! How does that work?

Well, it doesn't work. But we're working on it, and when it works, we're gonna do it.

Spinal Tap fans aren't the only film fanatics getting all slobbery over the upcoming crop of new DVD releases. There's a slew of other cult movie series enjoying a digital-media rebirth, as well. Foremost among them:



* Planet of the Apes: Ooh, help me Dr. Zaius! Everything you could want to know about the ape takeover of 2673 and its important implications for humankind can be found on Planet of the Apes: The Evolution. This collection of all five Apes films and a sixth disc containing the "Behind the Planet of the

Apes" documentary is not so much a box set as a reason to go on living. The behind-the-scenes film, an astoundingly thorough and engrossing doc hosted by Roddy McDowall, is a must-have for fans of the series, and reason enough to own this set. Buy it and please your future simian masters. (Fox Home Entertainment, \$99.98)



* The James Bond Collection:

All 19 Bond films are finally on special edition DVD (okay, actually that's pretty damn fast, isn't it?) with this third wave of 007 releases. This six-pack includes Diamonds Are Forever, From Russia With Love,

The Living Daylights, Octopussy, A View to a Kill and You Only Live Twice, features three out of the five charming gents who played Bond, and, like the other two sets. contains both highlights and low points of its 28-year run. Watch the underrated From Russia With Love again and again, have fun with Octopussy, and use A View to a Kill as a coaster. Hours of top-secret fun. (MGM, \$26.98 individually, \$134.96 for the set).



* The Omen: Okay, there's this kid. see, and he's not too nice. Actually, it's worse than that, he's the Antichrist. And he's freakin' creepy to boot. So, anyway, he does all this nasty stuff in the first movie, and then he does all this nasty stuff in the second movie. And then he grows up to be Sam Neill. Whoal The

movies are priced individually, so you can decide for yourself how much Omen you really need, but the fourth film in the series, Omen IV: The Awakening, is only available as part of the set, if anyone cares. (Fox Home Entertainment, \$29.98 individually, \$99.98 for the set).

Steve Palopoli, editor of The Knowledge, welcomes you to his little world.

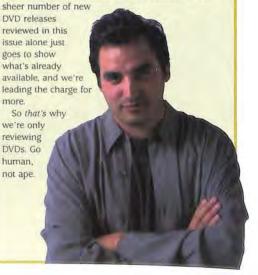
Let me be the first to say it: VHS is dead. Finished. Over. So Twentieth Century. It's time to update that bitchin' Buggles song and put the blame on DVD - this format is a movie lover's dream, and it makes tape look like the clumsy, primitive format it is. All of a sudden you can experience movies at home the way they were meant to be seen and heard; even the freeze-frame function looks, as a friend of mine puts it, "like a goddamn oil painting."

Still, if there's one question I get more than any other about The Knowledge, it has to be "Do you think Planet of the Apes will come true?" Sadly, yes. When you look at all the other Charlton Heston movies that have already come true (Antony and Cleopatra, The Agony and the Ecstasy, Airport 1975), it kind of seems inevitable, doesn't it?

The second most frequent question I get is "Why aren't you reviewing VHS?" Well, here's the thing: since the DVD for The Matrix made people sit up and take notice of this format, an ever-growing legion of movie fans have been discovering that their old VCRs make fantastic doorstops and, if you torch a goodsized hole in the middle, planters. Sales of DVD players are expected to increase by 300 percent worldwide this year, and DVDs will replace videocassettes completely within the next five years, according to a recent marketing study. The bottom line is that once you get your first taste of DVD, you never want to go back, and here at The Knowledge, we're not about to.

Growing every bit as fast as the DVD market is DVD technology. Here it is less than a year since The Matrix hit DVD, and we've already got a brandspanking new industry standard for everyone to measure up to: T2: The Ultimate Edition, which is our inaugural DVD of the Month. Finally we're moving away from distributors trying to pass off "interactive menus" and "scene access" as some kind of specialedition-worthy miracle (remember when just having the theatrical trailer on a disc seemed cool?) and toward T2's towering six hours of content.

True, some films haven't made it onto DVD yet, but if there's anyone who's pushing for them to get there, it's us. Mainly because of the simple fact that we're all movie fans ourselves, and this is the way we want to see our favorites. The cross-section and



Mercilessly squeezing every last drop of goodness from your DVD collection

COMMENTARIES THAT DON'T SUCK

Tired of dull directors sending you to sleep with their deadpan DVD commentaries? Never fear! TOTAL MOVIE rounds up the best "making-of" tracks in the world... ever!

By Steve Palopoli

s movie fans whose interest occasionally verges upon the dangerously anal (stop laughing at the back - you know what we mean), we at TOTAL MOVIE will always welcome any DVD thoughtful enough to include audio commentary from cast and crew. Problem is, just because a DVD has a commentary track doesn't mean it's worth listening to. In fact, video store shelves are groaning under the weight of DVDs saddled with desperately dull commentaries from deadpan directors and vapid actors who'd rather be snorting coke off some supermodel's chest in the Viper Room than holding forth about their on-set experiences. (But let's be fair. who wouldn't? - Ed)

But fear not! There are some real diamonds in the rough out there, if you know where to look - and we do. TOTAL MOVIE presents this quick'n'easy guide to the DVD commentaries that are actually worth tuning into...

ARMAGEDDON: Criterion Collection

THE SET-UP: Armageddon is hardly the kind of movie you'd expect to be chosen for an overhaul by the normally up-market Criterion Collection. But it actually turns out to be one



of their most entertaining audio commentaries yet, thanks to the comedic genius of... Ben Affleck? That's right, Affleck comes through with the yuks again and again as he reveals all about his experiences making the movie. There's also commentary from a somber Bruce Willis and director Michael Bay, both of whom will make you appreciate Affleck's smart-ass reality checks all the more

REVEALEDI: In the scene where Willis presents the crew's demands to the government, he's actually reading "suggestions" from the actors straight off the papers he's holding - and in fact Bay hadn't even seen what they'd written. Many of the film's comic bits, it's revealed, were improvised by the cast on-set.

SHINING MOMENT: There are too many bitchin' Affleck quotes to list, but his best moment is when he recalls taking Bay to task for the film's loopy plot. "I asked Michael why it was easier to train oil drillers to be astronauts than it was to train astronauts to be oil drillers, and he told me to shut the fuck up. So that was the end of that talk."

TYPICAL QUOTE:

AFFLECK: You ever notice how everyone in all these movies, they always have to be "the best." "He's the smartest man in the world." Bruce Willis is the "best deep-core driller?" I didn't know they rated deep-core drillers. You know what I mean? Like "I'm the best espresso maker there is in Manhattan." How do you know? Who's keeping track of these things?



SCREAM

THE SET-UP: The ruling teen-horror tag team of director Wes Craven and scripter Kevin Williamson explain how they set out to twist and tweak the cliches of the horror genre. After an hour or so of these two gleefully revealing their motivations for every character, scene and plot twist, you begin to realize that they packed way more in-jokes, references and less-thanobvious clues into their little scary movie than any one person could have ever picked up on REVEALED!: How Miramax head Bob Weinstein killed the Fonz; the dog-on-fire stories that Craven used to make Drew Barrymore cry; the off-the-rack origins of the Ghostface killa. SHINING MOMENT: There may be no greater joy in all of DVD Commentary Land than hearing Kevin Williamson ask Wes Craven. "What is postmodern horror, anyway?" TYPICAL QUOTE:

WILLIAMSON: There's the beer bong I made - is that the one I made? CRAVEN: That's the one you brought to me, 'cause I didn't know what one was. WILLIAMSON: And I of course knew all too well what one was.



THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

THE SET-UP: This notoriously nightmarish horror classic was also one of the most notoriously nightmarish shooting sets in movie history - it got so bad that co-star Edwin Neal once said of director Tobe Hooper, "If I ever see him again, I'll kill him." So in a way, it seems almost fortunate that no one put members of the cast and crew in the same room again until 23 years after the film was finished. It's not so much a matter of Hooper. Director of Photography Daniel Pearl and Gunnar "Leatherface" Hansen remembering the film shoot as it is of recovering their repressed memories of it; amazingly, they come up with some doozies.

REVEALED!: Hooper originally wanted to call the film Head Cheese and was hoping to release it with a PG rating; Leatherface's chainsaw did have a real blade on it all during filming, allowing Hansen to come this close to cutting off his own cojones.

SHINING MOMENT: Our intrepid trio give their own movie the Mystery Science Theater 3000 treatment, making up thoughts for a speechless onscreen Leatherface like, "Am I going to pass the graduate exams?"

TYPICAL QUOTE:

HANSEN: All during the filming, I'm saying to Tobe, "How are we going to shoot the scene where I get hit in the leg with the chainsaw?" and Tobe would say, "I don't know, but don't worry about it, it's the last shot in the movie." And I'd say, "Oh, that's good." And then I realized what he meant was, "If you're killed, we've got the movie in the can." HOOPER: Heh heh heh.

JOHN CARPENTER'S THE THING

THE SET-UP: Director John Carpenter and star Kurt Russell serve up some of the best behind-the-scenes stories you'll find on any disc. These two are old compadres, and listening to them on the commentary track, it's like they've actually come over to your house to watch the movie, down some cold ones, and shoot the shit. Russell in particular seems to be having the time of his life, even as Carpenter goes out of his way to make fun of his gargantuan onscreen headwear at every opportunity.



DVD extras

REVEALEDI: On-location drinking stories; Carpenter's concept for his "Apocalypse Trilogy" (The Thing, Prince of Darkness and In the Mouth of Madness), which we'd never heard anything about before

SHINING MOMENT: In an absolutely mind-warping segment, Russell and Carpenter discuss how the cast endlessly debated whether their characters would know if they had been taken over by the Thing. A close second: the founding meeting of the unofficial Wilford Brimley fan club.

TYPICAL QUOTE:

RUSSELL: Here comes Wilford.

CARPENTER: Will Brimley, who is one of the great all-time people.

RUSSELL: Yeah, they broke the mold there, didn't they?

CARPENTER: Will is the real thing. I mean, it's impossible for Will to ever do anything phony.

RUSSELL: He's a long way from those oatmeal commercials here, isn't he?

STARSHIP TROOPERS

THE SET-UP: Director Paul Verhoeven and scripter Ed Neumeier vindicate the most underrated and misunderstood movie of the '90s. Considering how many lame critics somehow missed the wicked satire of Troopers and labeled it "fascist," this commentary is essential to setting the record straight. But it's also a lot of fun, as they recall the biggest thrills and spills of making their buggy flick.

REVEALED!: Some scenes with Denise Richards' character had to be taken out because test audiences couldn't handle her kissing (gasp!) two different guys in the same film; the true story of the infamous "shower scene."



SHINING MOMENT: The lengths to which Verhoeven has to go to explain that this is a satire is somewhere between hilarious and sad, and somehow that thick Dutch accent makes it even funnier when he gets really excited: "This fascist propaganda that is apparent in the movie should be read as something that is not goot ... it is not goot! This is not a goot statement and this is not goot politics and if you see a black uniform, you should also know BAD. BAD, BAD, BAD! It's very simple!"

TYPICAL OUOTE:

when you've been

and crew can't agree.

NEUMEIER: Oh, the shower scene.

VERHOEVEN: Everything you've heard about the shower scene is true... The actors were a little bit embarrassed to do all that nudity in front of the crew.

NEUMEIER: And they challenged Paul Verhoeven and the D.P. Jost Vacano to take off their clothes. And it's true, they did.

VERHOEVEN: Yeah, we did it.

NEUMEIER: And then the cast said, "Please put your clothes back on."

DVD extras



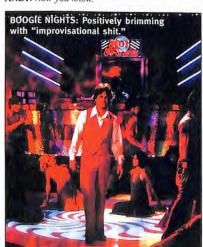
BOUND

THE SET-UP: Well whaddaya know, the director/producer team of Larry and Andy Wachowski (who went on to make The Matrix) turns out to be every bit as bizarre as you'd expect. Their deadpan, almost monotone delivery matches their blisteringly dry wit perfectly. But what's even more important is that they're able to nail the motive behind all of their artistic choices, right down to the wallpaper. To top it all off, for some reason they brought in renowned lesbian "sexpert" Susie Bright, who had a small part in the making of the film, to throw some fuel on the fire.

REVEALEDI: Gina Gershon's incredible morphing tattoo; how Joey Pantoliano had to fight for his right to do a nude scene.

SHINING MOMENT: Bright just can't stop sexperting, as evidenced by insights like, "This is the first nasty wet business in this movie, the beginning of a long line of nasty wet businesses." Or more to the point: "The hands are the sex organs in this. Hands are cocks." TYPICAL QUOTE:

LARRY: Interesting fact here. This closet is about 30 feet tall. And that was a pull chain, which no one ever knows what it is. But it's a pull chain. At the top. The big giant balls. ANDY: Now you know



BOOGIE NIGHTS

THE SET-UP: What's so great about the commentary from director Paul Thomas Anderson is that he obviously truly admires all of the actors he worked with on this film, and more than that, their performances crack him up. He also provides a surprising amount of background on everyone onscreen, including even the weird extras.

REVEALED!: Why Elliot Gould's picture is in the background of three separate shots; which real porno flicks influenced Boogie Nights

SHINING MOMENT: Anderson ponders at length how actor John C. Reilly leaves him "break-down-crying, fallingon-the-floor-thinking-I'm-going-to-throwup laughing." About the time he admits, "I can't get enough of him. I could stare

at that fuckin' face all day long," you're wondering if maybe our man Reilly needs to look into a restraining order.

TYPICAL QUOTE:

ANDERSON: This is just like you've got this scene that you've written and you just kind of feel like you've got three great actors and a bunch of cocaine and you'd be foolish if you didn't sit them down and get a bunch of improvisational shit.

Otherwise Known As: Three DVD Director's Commentaries That Have No Right To Be This Entertaining

BATS

The very idea that someone saw the need for a commentary track to accompany this movie is hilarious. What's even funnier is the commentary itself, as provided by director Louis Morneau and especially star Lou Diamond Philips. We can't prove anything, but we'd swear Philips got totally liquored up before going into the recording booth. He's a hoot all the way through,



introducing himself as "the really sexy one in the cowboy hat" and telling Morneau "I don't recall ever seeing you on the set." Morneau kinda plays along, but you can't help but wonder if the whole time he was sitting there nervously eyeing the door and thinking, "What the hell is up with this guy?"

Typical quote:

Philips: It's funny, 'cause those bats are really cute. I held one and fed it a mealworm and it was [switches to Jerry Lewis impersonation] such a cute little thing. Morneau: They are. It's hard to imagine they would eventually grow to rip someone's head off.

Philips: Yeah, but lucky for us, they do.

STRANGELAND

"Usually I like to be pretty funny, but this is a pretty serious film," says directorwriter-producer-star Dee Snider at the opening of his commentary track for Strangeland. "So don't expect a lot of jokes." He then proceeds to launch into one joke after the other. Thank God, 'cause the last thing you want to hear



is Snider mulling over his craptastic little flick like it was Citizen Kane. He does blather on a bit about how he hoped to "create a new horror icon" with this film (hey, Dee, didn't you do that already with the "I Wanna Rock" video?), but mostly he just goes off on one rant or tangent (or rant-tangent) after another. Even better, Snider's got the enthusiasm of a ten-year-old kid with a new bike, and he's not vain (or perhaps savvy) enough to hide his sheer amazement at basic moviemaking concepts like special effects and sets. But the high point has got to be when he declares in an all-tooknowing tone that "this whole Internet stalking thing is too easy." Uh-huh.

Typical quote:

Chucky? If I was making that movie. it'd be about five minutes long. "Oh, there's a doll coming after me!" Step on it. Leprechaun 5? Two minutes. It's a dwarf, you kick it. Scream? I don't know. A pimply-faced teenager with a scary mask - not even a very scary mask. Pull it off, smack him in the head and tell him to cut the crap. You know?

STIR OF ECHOES

You can bag on Stir of Echoes all you like, but writer-director David Koepp probably isn't going to argue with you. At least that's the sense you get listen-



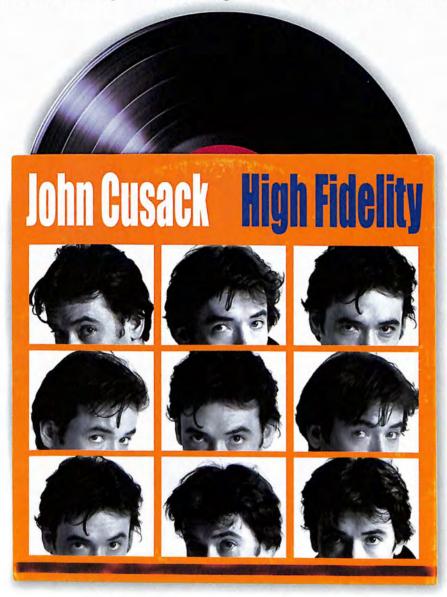
ing to the director's commentary track. where Koepp seems to be slightly embarrassed and yet slightly amused that he made such a corny movie. In any case, the writer of such movies as Jurassic Park and Carlito's Way (as well as the obscure gem Apartment Zero) appears to lack any pretension whatsoever, as evidenced by utterances such as, "Here comes my favorite cheesy shot in the movie!" His self-effacing wit is infinitely more entertaining than watching the actors flail through Stir of Echoes' pseudo-spooky dialogue, and it's technologically interesting, too.

Typical quote:

"Overwritten last line? You decide."

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Our verdict on the latest releases: two thumbs up, or just one finger?



MOVIE: The first Terminator was a tidy little science fiction mini-masterpiece with a great villain. It got most of its mileage out of dropping an oversized, overzealous and over-armed Arnold Schwarzenegger into a small-scale realistic setting and letting him completely trample it.

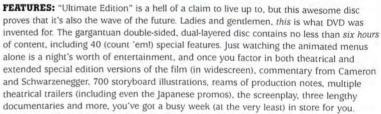
But with Terminator 2, returning writer-director James Cameron presses the concept of "bigger and better" right to the floor, dropping us straightaway into an epic storyline that's too big for even Arnie to handle alone. In the first thirty seconds of T2, the apocalyptic vision that could only be hinted at in the first film is suddenly right up there on screen in living color. After that mind-bending opening, all you can wonder is, where can this possibly go from here. And where it goes (after that monster of a scene in the redneck bar) is straight to the heart of our assumptions from the first film - which it then rips out in the brilliant scene where Schwarzenegger's familiar cyborg and Robert Patrick's T-1000 face off for the first time. Even though this late in the game we know what's really going on, we still relive the shock of this good guy/bad guy switcheroo through John (Edward Furlong), who's trapped between them.

Cameron plays with our expectations this way all through the film. "Come with me if you want to live" is only the most-quoted example of T2's incredible flair for irony, and this same messed-up mindset is what makes the movie such an intriguing piece of pop sci-fi. You know,

the idea for the artificial-intelligence network comes from the CPU of the Terminator that was created by the artificial-intelligence network, that kind of thing. Gotta love those tweaky time-travel-plotline paradoxes.

As for the action, the only thing that needs to be said is: when the semi truck smashes crossways through the freeway overpass, that's the moment you realize nothing is too over-the-top for this movie.

Watching T2 nearly 10 years later also recalls the little things that made this movie a milestone the first time out, and which still work today, like how perfect Patrick's performance and look are for his role, what a shock it was to see a crazed Linda Hamilton all buffed out and ready for the cover of Soldier of Fortune, and how often the groundbreaking computer effects have been ripped off since its release. And Arnie's deadpan facial expressions, of course, are still the effects that seal the deal.



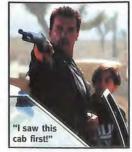
Of particular interest is the documentary T2: More Than Meets the Eye, which lavs out precisely which scenes cut from the theatrical release were restored for the special edition, and there's a lot of great insight from Cameron and the cast on why those pieces of the movie were filmed and why they were initially scrapped. The scenes, such as one in which Hamilton pulls a chip out of Arnie's head, and another where the T-1000 starts going wonky after the liquid-nitrogen incident, are interesting, but they also show once more (as did the howevermany-there-were special versions of Aliens) that one of Cameron's most laudable talents is his

ability to make tough decisions as an editor. Also included are a whole bunch of scenes that Cameron decided not to edit back into the special edition, including some very cool T-1000 stuff, and the original ending in which we see an elderly Sarah Connor contemplating her life in a now war-free 2029. In a word, fascinating.

BOTTOM LINE: A Skynet-sized package that redefines the state of the art in DVD. Not all aspects of the movie have aged well (Furlong's acting, for instance), but it still stands as arguably the best sci-fi/action film of its era, and one of Cameron's best. The features are incomparable, and even the packaging lives up to its ambitious title, right down to the super-cool brushed metal casing. Buy it, and buy it today.

- Steve Palopoli

Movie: *** Disc: ****





JAWS JAWS:

25TH ANNIVERSARY **COLLECTOR'S EDITION**

Universal, \$26.98

MOVIE: An all-time classic finally making its way to DVD is always cause to celebrate, and if the size of the movie is proportional to the size of the celebration, Jaws is at least a three-kegger. Hard to find for the longest time even on VHS, Spielberg's 1975 überclassic is finally back to celebrate its quarter-century, and whether you're seeing it for the first time (unlikely, we admit) or revisiting an old favorite, you'll find yourself surprised at the

film's undiminished capacity to keep you enthralled and, quite often, to scare the living crap out of you (Ben Gardner's head is still as Coke-spillingly shocking as it ever was). The classic moments are too many to mention: the music, the first two attacks, the shark autopsy. Quint's arrival and his heart-stopping USS Indianapolis monologue, the barrels, the cage, the final faceoff... hardly a minute goes by that we don't see something that has since entered into film lore and been copied (but never equaled) by Spielberg wannabes over and over again. Spielberg's skill has always been a combination of compelling characters (and great choices with actors) and an almost geeky attention to detail that allows him to pepper the film with perfect little touches throughout. And never has his genius been more on display than here - fact is, he's got you and the rest of the audience eating out of his hand from beginning to end. And you love it.

FEATURES: Universal pushed the boat out for this re-release. but even so, the disc comes up a little short of our expectations. The primary bummer is the lack of an audio commentary from Spielberg, which causes us to wonder if the Great One is ever going to step up to the mike. The good news is that the 75minute making-of documentary is a pretty good substitute,

rounding up virtually everybody who had anything to do with the film and boasting some cool deleted footage, including a shark attack that Spielberg edited out because he felt it was too graphic. Unlike most behind-the-scenes featurettes, this one's actually interesting enough to keep you watching; the story of a production so nightmarish that the film almost never got finished at all but which nevertheless went on to become (at the time) the biggest box-office hit ever is pretty irresistible, after all. Also on the disc, some out-of-context deleted scenes and out-takes that don't add up to much, trailers, storyboards, and a trivia game. A separate DTS edition is also available for those with a high-end audio hook-up.

BOTTOM LINE: A fine presentation of a jumbo-sized classic that virtually demands to be owned by any self-respecting movie fan. Watch one of the greatest movies of all time, then delve into the supplements and marvel at how a 27-year-old kid out of his depth in every sense somehow managed to pull it off.

- Gary Whitta

Movie ★★★★ Disc ★★★





GORGEOUS

Columbia TriStar, \$24.95

MOVIE: Between Rush Hour and Shanghai Noon, Jackie Chan headed back to Hong Kong to co-write. produce and star in this strangely silly romance/action hybrid. Chan plays a womanizing (and kickboxing) entrepreneur who finds himself being wooed by a giggly Taiwanese girl. The bizarre plot is of course punctuated by the trademark fight scenes - four in all - which, while hardly vintage lackie, do include two stunning kickboxing bouts with Australian newcomer Bradley James Allen, who's going to be one to watch.
FEATURES: Lots of choices here.

Full-screen or widescreen versions are included, as are both the original Cantonese and dubbed English language tracks. There's also commentary from Chan, a music video and a behind-thescenes feature

BOTTOM LINE: The combination of a hit-and-miss movie and an authoritative presentation on DVD make Gorgeous one for Chan completists only.

- Gary Whitta

Movie. # # Disc ***



REINDEER GAMES

Buena Vista, \$29.99

MOVIE: Ben Affleck plays a convict who gets out of prison. meets up with his dead excellmate's pen-pal girlfriend (Charlize Theron), and then gets himself into your typical blackmail/Indian casino-robbery scenario. Oh, wait, before all that, you can take in the eyeful of dead shopping-mall Santa Clauses; this is supposed to alert you that these events are related. If you think that's crazy, you won't want to miss the wacky twists and turns. Or maybe you will.

FEATURES: 1.85:1 ratio widescreen, 5.1 Dolby Digital sound, no extras.

BOTTOM LINE: just as he's become one of Hollywood's rising stars, Affleck gets tangled up in a cheap faux thriller that has all the staying power of decaffeinated coffee. The action, dialogue and acting are all just plain lazy, and the biggest drag is watching Affleck smirk his way through this tripe

- Helen Meservey

Movie: * * Disc: #



THE GREEN MILE

Warner Bros., \$24.98

MOVIE: There are so many reasons why The Green Mile shouldn't work: it's too long, it's too slow, it's pompous, it's predictable, and it's plenty sappy. But there is now an actual medical condition on the books in which the body begins producing a neurochemical that makes one instantly trust any character played by Tom Hanks and his performance here as head guard on a death-row cellblock where one of the inmates is discovered to have supernatural powers draws you into the movie and holds you for most of three hours. FEATURES: 1.85:1 ratio

widescreen, 5.1 Dolby Digital sound, theatrical trailer, behindthe-scenes documentary Walking The Mile

BOTTOM LINE: When it's rold the right way on screen, a good Stephen King story is like a campfire tale. It may seem silly the next morning, but you can't help but be hooked while it unfolds. This is just such a story, and The Green Mile is just such a film.

- Steve Palopoli

Movie: ** Disc: * * *



THE NINTH GATE

Artisan, \$24.98

MOVIE: God knows there are too many freakin' movies about Satan and his wascally minions on Earth, but if anybody could pull off another one, you'd figure it would be Roman Polanski. And you'd be wrong, wouldn't you? Johnny Depp plays a rare-book collector who discovers he's on the Reading Highway to Hell when he tries to track down the surviving copies of a tome said to be co-authored by Lucifer. FEATURES: Choice of 2.35:1

ratio widescreen or pan'n'scan, Dolby Digital 5.1 sound, commentary from Polanski, and a making-of documentary.

BOTTOM LINE: The Ninth Gate is too bland and slick to make good film noir, and it sure ain't a horror movie. The story is a drag, while the characters and their motivations seem like forgeries - or (at most) plagiarisms from other, better works. It's nice to have a commentary from this controversial director, but who cares what he has to say about this pile of crud?

- Steve Palopoli

Movie: * Disc * * *



THE DEFENDER

Buena Vista, \$29.99

MOVIE: Repeat collaborators Jet Li and director Corey Yuen team up again to remake The Bodyguard in this US repackaging of a 1994 Hong Kong import. Since we know Li can kick Kevin Costner's ass from here to the People's Republic of China, there's no problem there. And as an officer in an elite corps of Red Army bodyguards, Li is even more no-nonsense than usual as he protects a beautiful woman (Christy Chung) from the hired thugs of a ruthless businessman she plans to testify against in a murder trial

FEATURES: 1.85:1 ratio widescreen and 5.1 Dolby Digital sound, but absolutely no extras to speak of

BOTTOM LINE: The pace is pokey and the action is slow in coming, but the humor survives the dubbing process and the final third is spectacular. The slam-bang action of the extended climactic showdown makes this a sure bet for Li fans.

- Tony Hermosia

Movie: *** Disc *



THE TALENTED MR. RIPLEY

Paramount, \$29.99

MOVIE: You gotta love good movies about psychopaths. I'm not talking about your garden-variety serial killer flicks, I mean the ones about really complicated nutjobs. Matt Damon keeps things on edge here as the obsessive Ripley, whose "talents" for lying, forging and faking mark him as increasingly koo-koo for Cocoa Puffs. FEATURES: 1.85:1 ratio

widescreen, Dolby Digital 5.1 sound, commentary from director Anthony Minghella, interviews with cast and crew, two music videos, two theatrical trailers and two making-of featurettes.

BOTTOM LINE: Somehow Minghella avoids the unbearably weepy sentimentality of past efforts such as The English Patient, choosing instead to peel back layer after sinister layer of this story. Despite a couple of bland stretches in the second half, Ripley keeps the surprises coming all the way to the end. - Steve Palopoli

Movie: ****
Disc: ****

EVIL DEAD SET



Possibly the single most whacked trilogy in movie history, Sam

Raimi's Evil Dead flicks are the horror-film fan's equivalent of a speed fix. This series was a constant beer can to the head of movie culture throughout its decade-long run, and even today the first two films in particular rarely fail to squeeze a squeal of guilty pleasure from newbies as they get their first dose of the infamous "Raimi-cam." This guy is the only known director whose camerawork goes from 0 to 60 in 3.7 seconds, but that's only the most obviously sexy allure of these cult faves. With the release of the final chapter, Army of Darkness, Anchor Bay now has the whole series on DVD. Trying to

figure out the confounding story arc over

all three films, the huge gaps in plot logic

or why a different actress portrays Ash's

girlfriend Linda in every film is beside the

EVIL DEAD

point - just hold on.

What otherwise might have been just one more goofy low-budget '80s flick about young 'uns being stalked in the woods was crafted by Raimi into a gleefully nasty thrill-kill of a film that pitted a creepy, starkly moody setting against intense scenes of manic mayhem. The set-up couldn't be more simple (or hokey, really): Four students on "vacation" in a freaky backwoods cabin discover a book that can conjure soul-sucking demons. However, they carefully avoid accidentally summoning the ancient evil and a good time is had by all. Nah, just kidding actually, all hell breaks loose. There are plenty of shocks, but any fan will tell you that the true chills come from Betsy Baker in her perpetually disturbing "We're gonna get you" scene. Movie: *** Disc: **

EVIL DEAD II: DEAD BY DAWN

Come for the spastic point-of-view camerawork, stay for the over-the-top gore! This was the point at which Raimi first threw continuity, common sense and the boundaries of human endurance to the wind. It's also the point at which the horror genre was introduced to the Three Stooges. Bruce Campbell came into his own in this one as series hero and living cartoon Ash - his classic scene battling his own hand may be the high point of the trilogy. It's not hard to understand why Evil Dead II is often mistaken for a big-budget remake of the first film, as it features a lengthy re-working of Evil Dead at the beginning, but story-wise it eventually does become a proper sequel (it doesn't help that Raimi robs a couple bits from his first film later on). The bottom line, in any case, is that this movie is totally nuts, and the ending remains one of the weirdest in horror history. Movie: ★★★★ Disc: ★★

ARMY OF DARKNESS

While by far the weakest film in the trilogy (isn't that always the way?), Army of Darkness still has plenty of Raimi's signature touches. The idea of booting the series out of the woods and into a medieval wasteland is hilarious, but like Ash's '73 Oldsmobile, the film is low on gas. The cheesy horrorcomedy aspects don't get anywhere near as funny or as out-of-control as in Evil Dead II, and the story often drags. Any way you look at it, it's Campbell as the ever-more-kickass Ash who keeps Army of Darkness on its feet. The disc. though, is a whole other story - this is definitely Anchor Bay's best offering in the series in terms of features. Extras include a behind-the-scenes documentary on "The Men Behind The Army" and the film's original "apocalypse" ending, which seems every bit as appropriate a closer to this freaky series as the more familiar climax they added in later.

Movie: ★★★ Disc: ★★★

- Steve Palopoli



MEN IN BLACK

Columbia TriStar, \$29.95

MOVIES: The best of Will Smith's "Fourth of July" blockbusters, this is the one where he really hits his comic stride. Co-star Tommy Lee Jones, meanwhile, lands his best straight-man role ever as the mismatched pair secretly police alien visitors (and "illegal aliens," har-har) in an Earth-as-Mos-Eisley-spaceport scenario. That at least explains why most of the aliens look like they could have been in the cantina band, I guess, but the effects are kind of a letdown. The writing is better, though it's not as consistently funny as director Barry Sonnenfeld's previous Get Shorty. But if you don't like one joke, there'll be another one coming along in a few seconds, and the tone is just about right for a comic-book movie.

FEATURES: Loads of great stuff makes up for the fact that we've had to wait ages for this DVD. 1.85:1 widescreen, Dolby Digital 5.1 sound, scene deconstructions, deleted scenes, a making-of documentary, the Will Smith music video, theatrical trailers, storyboards, production notes and DVD-ROM features. There's also commentary from Sonnenfeld and Iones. with an innovative twist:

the "visual commentary" includes an NFLstyle "telestrator" and little MST3K-like silhouettes of the two guys at the bottom of the screen – but while Sonnenfeld is effusive, Jones apparently decided to extend his deadpan movie performance to his commentary.

BOTTOM LINE: Like Agent Jay's miniature raygun, this disc packs a surprisingly big wallop. As for the film, *Men In Black* is the odd summer-movie creature that, box-office megasuccess aside, is really meant for a cultish following that appreciates touches like the trippy final sequence and lines like "You sold a reverberating carbonizer with mutate capacity to an unlicensed cephalapoid?" Those same fans are the ones that'll appreciate the care and attention lavished on this Collector's Series package.

- Steve Palopoli
Movie: *** Disc: ****



ROMEO MUST DIE

Warner Bros, \$24.98 MOVIE: Barroom brawls? Bonecrunching kung-fu? Motorcyclists firing Uzis as they fly through the air? Now that's Shakespeare! As you might guess, this Jet Li vehicle has only the most fleeting connection to Romeo and Juliet, but that makes Romeo Must Die even more fun and over-the-top than it already is. And I'm telling you, it's hard to get more over-the-top than Li beating up an entire unit of prison guards while suspended upside-down from the ceiling. FEATURES: 2.35:1 ratio widescreen, Dolby Digital 5.1 sound, three music videos, 13 behind-the-scenes shorts, two the atrical trailers. DVD-ROM features **ROTTOM LINE:** Fans of let Li will

widescreen. Dolby Digital 5.1 sound, three music videos, 13 behind-the-scenes shorts, two the-atrical trailers, DVD-ROM features. BOTTOM LINE: Fans of Jet Li will dig the extra material showing Li at work on the action scenes, and they'll like how the scenes came out in the film, as well. Oh, and by the way, National Football League representatives keep machine guns in their briefcases. If you take one thing away from this film, for God's sake let it be that. Otherwise, just sit back and enjoy the Bard's shining moment as a martial-arts master.

- Steve Palopoli

Movie: ***
Disc ***



STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN

Paramount, \$29.99

MOVIE: Undeniably the alphamale of all Trek flicks, Wrath of Khan is the closest this franchise has ever come to real greatness. Ricardo Montalban kicks ass as the genetically-superior Khan, out to avenge the shafting Kirk gave him in the 1967 TV episode Space Seed. Taut space battles, snappy dialogue and a (literally) killer ending all add up to the kind of sizzlin' Star Trek action that we've yet to see again in the seven movies since. Pity.

FEATURES: Paramount has been slow to embrace the format, but its handling of the Star Trek DVDs is particularly woeful. If there's any audience that would lap up deleted scenes and other extras, it's Trekkies – so why is the theatrical trailer all we get? Come on, surely Shatner and Nimoy could have done a commentary trackier is not like they've got anything better to do these days.

BOTTOM LINE: A good digital transfer of a great movie, but the lack of any decent extras is a major bummer

- Gary Whitta

Movie ****

Disc: *



THE BEACH Warner Bros, \$24.98

MOVIE: As a young, free-spirited traveler who embarks on an adventure to find a perfect beach hidden somewhere in Thailand, Leonardo DiCaprio once again finds himself splashing around in the ocean with a sexy babe. And what do you know, not an iceberg in sightl His paradise quickly turns into a disaster area, however, when a duplicate map to the island falls into the wrong hands. American tourists. What's with the

PEATURES: 2.35.1 ratio widescreen, Dolby 5.1 surround sound, commentary from director Danny Boyle, deleted scenes, storyboards, a behind-the-scenes featurette, four trailers, 10 TV ads, cast and crew bios and a music video.

hallucinogenic caterpillars?

BOTTOM LINE: Watching this skinny kid skulk through a rain forest with a bandana wrapped around his head for 45 minutes straight is enough to make you wish the Predator would drop in and chase his pasty ass around the island. The scores of extras can't make up for pretty-boy Leo's limp Sly Stallone impersonation.

- Doug Trueman

Movie : ★★ Disc: ★★★★

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Warner Bros., \$92.92

Will this eclectic six-pack make your day?

The man who first made his name, or lack thereof, in Sergio Leone's *Dollars* flicks has gone on to be one of the all-time top contenders in the ongoing Body Count Sweepstakes. But as this new six-disc collection of his films shows, Clint Eastwood always seems torn between a simple stone-cold approach in front of the camera, and a burning desire to pitch his complicated world view nearly every time he steps behind it. It's a bit surprising, then, that in this half-and-half split of films directed by Eastwood and by others, the Grizzled One generally comes out ahead at the helm. The discs don't have any commentary from Eastwood or anyone else, but they do feature remastered sound and various low-impact profiles, production notes and theatrical trailers. Here's the scorecard, in chronological order:

THE BEGUILED (1971)

After kissing off his relationship with Sergio Leone (he went so far as to price himself out of an appearance in Leone's magnum opus Once Upon A Time In The West), Eastwood churned out four films with director Don Siegel between 1968 and 1971, and this little-known Civil War gothic is hands down the worst of them. Clint plays a Union soldier shot behind enemy lines and discovered by kids from a Southern girls' school. The women who run the school agree to let him stay there while he recovers from his wounds. Will he be turned over to the Confederate army? Can he talk, lie or seduce his way out of it? Is this movie every bit as lame as its title? Yes, indeed. The combination of bad child actors, hideous costume melodrama and the painfully silly use of "interior dialogues" is deadly. Only the deviant sexual undertones provide any character at all, and those are hardly freaky enough to keep The Beguiled from being a total bore. Movie: * Disc: **

DIRTY HARRY (1971)

The moment he first appears onscreen in Don Siegel's no-bullshit crime thriller, Eastwood leaves his No Name days behind for good, clinching his crown as the strongest and silentest of the strong and silent types. His Inspector Harry Callahan is RoboCop for a pre-cyberpunk world – this guy makes Martin Riggs look like a mama's boy. The set-up is supposed to be that psycho-killer Scorpio is menacing the city of San Francisco, but in retrospect the whole movie is basically Callahan slowly, relentlessly stalking his prey. And let's face it, this chump doesn't have a chance against Harry. Chiseled and grim, Eastwood looks and acts like he was born to play the Angel of Death in a tailored suit, and to this day it's difficult to tell if Siegel wanted us to love or fear his renegade cop. But the character has continued to strike a chord with audiences though five films, and this first installment, besides being the best of the bunch, is one of the rawest crime movies on record.

Movie: *** Disc: **

THE OUTLAW JOSEY WALES (1976)

This terrific genre oddity, Eastwood's fourth outing as both director and star, still hasn't completely earned the respect it deserves. It starts out as a Western take on the '70s paranoia film, as everybody on both sides of the law seems to be out to get poor Josey, and he's out to get them back after his family is slaughtered. After a few good twists in this vein – c'mon now, what's not to love about a cowboy conspiracy flick? – The Outlaw Josey Wales evolves into a weird-but-cool vision of Old West utopia. Eastwood is at his best onscreen, lending an unusual amount of depth and motivation to his cowboy

role, and co-star Chief Dan George pushes his quirky character beyond typical sidekick territory. As a director, Eastwood's track record has been hit-and-miss, but after a confusing start here (who are those people shooting at?), he nails one of his masterpieces, Trust no one, pardner. Movie: *** Disc: **

BRONCO BILLY (1980)

This is one of Eastwood's personal favorites, but after watching it, it's hard to figure out why. Maybe it's because one of his favorite recurring themes as a director – strangers pulling together to create a makeshift family – is on center stage in this tale of a down-on-their-luck modern Wild West troupe who cross paths with a high-falutin' heiress in trouble. Bronco Billy was also probably a lot of fun for Eastwood, since he gets to play a more comic incarnation of his cowboy persona as the sharpshooting star of the show. But it's all too corny in the end. Eastwood's Billy destroys dinnerware like nobody's business, but that's about as good as the



It's hard not to see *Unforgiven* as the logical conclusion to Eastwood's cowboy-character career. His role here seems to be the return of the Man With No Name (even though he has one – William Munny, and yes, the pun is no doubt intended), and the movie finds him deep into retirement, haunted by years of killin' and thievin'. But in movies like this there's always One Last Job, and with his family in dire financial straits. Munny has to take it. If he was once the Man With No Name, the world hasn't changed much in terms of ruthlessness and evil since he dropped out; if anything. Sheriff Bill Daggett (an incredible performance from Gene Hackman) is the most ruthless and evil of them all. Appropriately, Eastwood as director turns this bleak story of elusive redemption into the anti-Leone Western: every

bullet counts, every bullet hurts and after a while, a few dollars more don't seem like near enough reason to take your guns to town. Brilliant all around.

Movie: ★★★★ Disc: ★★★

IN THE LINE OF FIRE (1993)

Finally willing to stand up and shout to the world, "I am an old geezer, damn it!," Eastwood plays another over-the-hill hero, this time a burnt-out Secret Service agent. He's in a surprisingly chipper mood throughout Wolfgang Petersen's star-driven assassination thriller, flirting with Rene Russo, poking fun at his own glare, and even having a heart-to-heart or two with the psycho who wants to kill the President – good god, man, what would Harry Callahan

say? John Malkovich is plenty weasely as the would-be assassin, but the cat-and-mouse setup between him and Eastwood's agent gets a little too contrived, especially with all the Kennedy parallels. The premise is smart, and Eastwood's on top of his game, but often Petersen just seems to be going through the motions.

Movie: *** Disc: *

The Outlaw

Josey Wales:

classic Clint

BOTTOM LINE: Hard-core Eastwood aficionados will no doubt lap up this collection, but more casual Clintsters are going to question some of the choices made here. While Dirty Harry. Josey Wales and Unforgiven are bullet-proof, the others are anything but. Where's his slow-burn performance in Don Siegel's Escape from Alcatraz, or his directorial debut Play Misty For Me? And we'd take Firefox over In The Line of Fire any day.

Overall: ***

- Steve Palopoli



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STREET DATE

Other New Releases To Watch For



If The Patriot reminded you that the first Braveheart never did make it onto DVD,

buck up. Just hitting stores is a brand-spanking new disc featuring Mel Gibson's battle-ready historical epic about the fight for Scottish independence. The Braveheart DVD, which has become some kind of Holy Grail to fans who have had plenty of time since 1996 to ponder when the hell somebody was going to get this thing digital, includes commentary from director-star Mel Gibson and a 28-minute featurette entitled Kilts: Keepin' It Breezy. Okay, actually, it's called Braveheart: A Filmmaker's Passion, but we really wanted a documentary about kilts. (Paramount, \$29.99)

If, like Kevin Spacey, you rule, you're probably waiting for the DVD release of *American Beauty*. It'll be out October 24 in what's being called an "Awards Edition." What's an Awards Edition? Well apparently it means "no deleted scenes," but with commentary from director Sam Mendes and writer Alan Ball, a storyboard feature, a making-of documentary, and a DVD-ROM feature that allows you to watch the movie on one side of your screen while you scroll through the screenplay on the other, we'll take it. (Dreamworks, \$26.99)



Toy Story 2, the only sequel featuring a computergenerated cowboy and spaceman ever to kick the animated ass of its predecessor, hits DVD on October 17. Interestingly, there are a couple of options. If you want the basic plan, there's a two-disc set that includes both Toy Story flicks, with a few extras on the Toy Story 2 DVD (Pixar's early short

Luxo Jr. short film and some outtakes). But if you've really got a Woody for this series, you're gonna have to go with the three-disc Ultimate Toy Box, which has a bonus disc of extra material. Included is a history of the series, never-before-seen material, a guide to the in-jokes, abandoned concepts and more. (Buena Vista Home Entertainment, \$39.99 for the twin-pack, \$69.99 for the three-disc set).

Finally, just when you thought the Cenobites were down for the count, *Hellraiser V: Inferno* goes straight-to-video, as indeed it should. The plot is something about a cop stuck in hell who has to use the puzzle box to escape, but the important thing is probably that Doug Bradley is back as Pinhead – for, like, ten minutes. (Buena Vista Home Entertainment, \$29.99).



INDEPENDENCE DAY: SPECIAL EDITION

20th Century Fox, \$34.99

MOVIE: Okay, so it's been four years since the summer of '96, and *Independence Day*'s numerous brain-numbing "plot" twists, leaps of faith and cheesy characterizations have not aged well. But summer event flicks are first and foremost about stuff getting blow'd up real good, and on that level *ID4* remains a towering example of the genre, as this luxurious and long-awaited two-disc set demonstrates. For the most part achieving the potential of its awesome alien invasion premise, the movie delivers plenty of mind-blowing scenes (the attack, the mass aerial dogfights, the alien autopsy) and the kind of ensemble cast that demands anyone's attention. The special effects give the movie a scope that Ray Harryhausen could only have dreamed of in the '50s, when he designed nearly this exact scenario for *Earth vs. The Flying Saucers*. So shift your brain into neutral,

break out the nachos and remind yourself what highconcept action movies are all about.

FEATURES: If you thought the movie's climax was a little on the ludicrous side, just wait until you check out the deleted scene of the original ending, in which Randy Quaid destroys the alien ship with a missile strapped to the side of his bi-plane. Yup, no kidding, Roland Emmerich and Dean Devlin talk about why they made the wise decision to scrap it. They also supply interesting and upbeat commentary for the movie itself, which you can watch in either its original form, or with nine restored (but largely redundant) minutes. Now that's how you do extras! On the second disc, a slew of behind-the-scenes featurettes, storyboards, concept art and trailers. Everything you could possibly ask for, really. And the menus are gorgeous. BOTTOM LINE: It's been a long time coming, but the ID4 Special Edition is an object lesson in how to do a bellsand-whistles DVD.

- Gary Whitta

Movie: ★★★ Disc: ★★★★

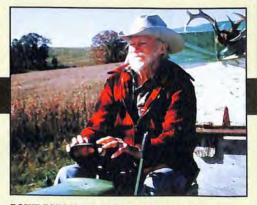
DVD Wishlist

MHY, MHY ISH'I THIS MUVIE UN DISC TEL?

THE STRAIGHT STORY

MOVIE: David Lynch's strange but surprisingly straightforward movie is a work of filmmaking genius. His commitment to the gentle, quiet story proves he's not just throwing out a G-rated movie to prove he's weirder and even less predictable than we already thought, but *The Straight Story* still has a lot of his signature quirky touches. I mean, c'mon, this is the true story of Alvin Straight, the 73-year-old lowa man who drove his riding lawnmower for six weeks over 300 miles to visit his alling brother.

THE INJUSTICE OF IT ALL: The Straight Story is already out on VHS, but Buena Vista Home Entertainment hasn't yet announced a date for the DVD. As of now, it looks like it'll be 2001 at the earliest. WHY WE WANT IT: When I want to watch an old man ride a lawn mower for two hours in the original widescreen format, I want to watch it NOW, damn it. Seriously, this is probably the weirdest take on the Great American Roadtrip Movie ever, as Lynch offers up a unique insight into the America we think we know by forcing us to look at it not from a different perspective so much as a different speed – namely about three miles an hour. The cinematography is freakin' majestic, and a creaky pan-and-scan VHS presentation is simply not going to do it proper justice.



DON'T FORGET TO ADD: Audio commentary from David Lynch is essential. *The Straight Story* is clearly a labor of love for him, and it would be cool to hear about how he put together a movie that's so completely different than what people expect of him. And while we're on the subject, why not some commentary from star Richard Farnsworth? This is the role of his career, and his performance is incredible.

FANTASY BONUS MATERIALS: Deleted scene of an action-packed lawnmower chase sequence in which Alvin outmaneuvers international terrorists with bazookas, who coincidentally are also riding lawnmowers. Alvin's John Deere is revealed to be equipped with surface-to-surface missiles, a smokescreen and an oil slick.

ALTERNATE ENDING: Alvin is hooked up to a virtualreality machine by long-lost brother Harry Dean Stanton and wreaks havoc as super-intelligent cybergod.

- Steve Palopoli



DEAD AGAIN Paramount, \$29.99

MOVIE: Scott Frank is a sharp scribe (he wrote Out of Sight), and this murder mystery is his most complex and, arguably, most interesting script. It's a leap-offaith-and-a-half to buy into the plot of two lovers dying in one lifetime and meeting up again in the next, but once you do, you're hooked. You'll then endure inconsistent acting and confusing context shifts, not to mention gratuitous scissors references while waiting for the climax,

FEATURES: 1.85:1 ratio widescreen, Dolby Digital 5.1 sound, theatrical trailer, audio commentary from cast and crew members

which, surprisingly, is almost

worth it.

BOTTOM LINE: It's easy to take the stylistic and character parallels between each era for granted, so it's cool that producer Lindsay Doran and Frank point them out in the entertaining commentary to a so-so film. Director-star Kenneth Branagh cops to inside jokes, but fails to apologize for his then-wife Emma Thompson overacting like a community theater reject.

- Scott Warden



PATLABOR 1

Manga, \$29.95

MOVIE: This intriguing piece of anime from director Mamoru Oshii (of Ghost in the Shell fame) has a densely layered story and a mystery that pulls you into the proceedings, but the coolest thing about Patlabor 1 can be summed up in two words: big-ass robots. These super-advanced giant tanks are used by Tokyo's Mobile Police in the year 1999 (!) to keep order while the city completes a huge construction project called "Operation Babilon." So why are the newest models going nuts. and how can the Patlabor cops stop the whole metal army from going on the rampage? FEATURES: Full screen, Dolby

Digital 5.1 sound, multiple languages, previews of other anime films, and info on the Manga fan club.

BOTTOM LINE: You simply cannot go wrong with berserk giant robots. It's just not possible. Even the scene in the robot factory is riveting - no pun intended. But the complex story is interesting, as well, and the weird Biblical connection really works. Did I mention there are giant robots?

- Tony Hermosia Movie: *** Disc: ***



THE HURRICANE

Universal, \$26.98

MOVIE: If you're not familiar with the story of '60s boxing dynamo Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, who was wrongly sentenced to three life prison terms for murders he clearly didn't commit, it can be hard to see where this movie's going. The Hurricane dances around several time frames at once, and after a while all the weaving between plot threads makes the film feel like a DUI. It's really about halfway through that director Norman Jewison lays off the time-travel experiments, the story comes together, and The goes, but there's no drag at all as this one goes into its final rounds trailer, deleted scenes, audio commentary from Jewison, a making-of documentary. DVD-ROM features.

complicated character study of Carter, Denzel Washington deserves much of the credit for movies he's been stuck in lately.

REPO MAN

Anchor Bay, \$29.98



making this work. Nice to see him in this role after all those lame cop - Steve Palopoli

Movie: *** Disc: ***



HOLY SMOKE Buena Vista, \$29.99

LIMITED EDITION Anchor Bay, \$39.98

SUPERGIRL:

MOVIE: Just when we thought we had seen the last of this dwindling franchise, along came this 1984. spin-off which revealed Superman has a female cousin. What follows from that premise is a cheeseencrusted bonanza of complete nonsense about something called an Omegahedron, bizarre blackmagic sub-plots and hammy turns from such normally respectable actors as Peter O'Toole, Mia Farrow and Fave Dunaway FEATURES: This inexplicably luxurious two-disc set features both the original movie and a 138-minute "international

commentary, a featurette, trailers and TV spots BOTTOM LINE: There's something very strange about a limited edition, two-disc Supergirl; I can think of about 500 films that better deserve this kind of lavish treatment - like, hello, Superman? Only worth checking out if you're looking to create some kind of freaky Ripley's Believe It or Not-

style collection of DVD oddities.

edition." There's also director

- Gary Whitta

MOVIE: Harvey Keitel plays an

American "exit specialist" hired by a desperate Australian family to lure their daughter Ruth (Kate Winslet) away from the culty clutches of an Indian guru. Ruth, of course, thinks she's found enlightenment, and just wants her family to get the hell off of her cloud But she agrees to spend three days with cagey Keitel, who we all know is just looking for an excuse to get naked in another movie, and an alleged battle of the sexes ensues FEATURES: 1.85:1 ratio widescreen, 5.1 Dolby Digital sound, and absolutely no

BOTTOM LINE: The setup for this weird little Jane Campion flick is good, but the story seems to take on more than it can handle. Is it about a spiritual stand-off between a young believer and an older expert? Is it about the sexual tension between a younger woman and an older man? This time out, Campion can't

make us care. - Helen Meservey Movie ** Disc *



widescreen, Dolby Digital 5.1 sound, commentary with Cox and other cast and crew, theatrical trailer

BOTTOM LINE: Cox's odd but stylish camerawork looks fantastic on this disc, and it's still hard to beat Emilio Estevez yelling a Black Flag song in the desert, but Repo Man has aged about as gracefully as the careers of everyone involved - Steve Palopoli Movie: *** Disc. ***

MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER 3000

The Brain That Wouldn't Die

Eegah

Rhino Home Entertainment, \$19.95 each

In the not-too-distant future -Next Sunday, A.D. -There was a guy named Joel, Not too different from you or me. He worked at Gizmonic Institute. Just another face in a red jumpsuit. He did a good job cleaning up the place, But his bosses didn't like him So they shot him into space.

Mystery Science Theater 3000 was one of the coolest shows in television history, and it remains the only truly satisfying way to watch so-bad-it-hurts movies from Hollywood's junkvard. The premise was simple: a poor, humble Earthling was blasted onto the Satellite of Love where he was to be the guinea pig for a most cruel and unusual form of torture: watching some of the worst movies ever made. But in a feat of electrical engineering that would humble even MacGuyver, he built a bunch of robot buddies to keep him company. On each

episode, he and two of his artificial friends slagged every movie sent their way. The show ran for more than a decade, first on Comedy Central and then on the Sci-Fi Channel, until it was sacked late last year by emotionless network bigshots. But never fear Croooow!, Tom Servo and the rest will have their revenge...

The first two MST3K DVDs from Rhino Home Video feature the

episodes exactly as they were broadcast, including the theme song, the robots cavorting before the film begins, and, of course, the vicious commentary. They also feature the films in their



unexpurgated, unheckled format, though Eegah, a Grade-Z caveman-on-the-loose movie which stars a pre-talent Richard "Jaws" Kiel, and The Brain That Wouldn't Die, possibly the worst in the highly competitive field of bad severed-head flicks, are really only tolerable when being obliterated by the gallery ("He's at the twenty! The ten! No one can stop

him!" - Croooow!, watching as a mad scientist flees a burning car wreck with his girlfriend's head in a sack).

Eegah to please: Richard Kiel in ripe-for-ridiculing,

pre-Bond caveman antics

These two DVDs also make it possible to view parts of the films that the MST3000 crew had to cut to fit their hijinks into two hours, but the space would have been better used for behindthe-scenes shots or commentary that the writers doubtless came up with but wasn't suitable for broadcast Unfortunately, there are no other features to speak of, which is a real shame considering how much each episode had to work with. But fans of the show will be grateful that not a single muttered epithet has been cut, and they can start building their DVD collection now. (Incidentally, the movie ratings below are for the MST3K-ed versions of the films).

- Doug Trueman

Eegah Movie: *** Disc: *** The Brain That Wouldn't Die Movie: *** Disc: ***

SCREAM COLLECTION

Buena Vista, \$89.90

In 1994, the *Nightmare on Elm Street* franchise was pretty much at the end of its rope. When series creator Wes Craven came back for the seventh film, it seemed like one last gasp for a moribund series. But instead, it was a dry run for a new one: *Wes Craven's New Nightmare* was bizarre, clever and more interesting than all the other Freddy sequels put together. In a fresh twist on the story, Craven had the *Nightmare* actors play themselves and turned the film into the horror genre's first significant stab at postmodern self-reference.

Clearly realizing that there was no genre more ripe for such a treatment, Craven came back two years later with a film that expanded *New Nightmare*'s vision to take on the whole history of scary movies. Featuring a funnied-up factor from screenwriter Kevin Williamson, *Scream*, simply put, changed everything. Three films later, the saga is out on DVD in a four-disc box set that includes a trilogy fully packed with extras and an entire disc of bonus material.

SCREAM

You gotta chuckle when way-cool horror hipsters try to write off *Scream* as "too Hollywood." Well, duh! The whole reason this movie works is that it plays off of all the time-honored Hollywood horror formulae and cliches that fans have laughed about for years, even though they love the films. To quote Homer Simpson, it's funny because it's true. Even better, it laid down the "rules" of the genre before proceeding to break them one by one.

The first one out the window, in the crazy opening scene with Drew Barrymore, was the horror cliche of victims flailing their arms helplessly as they wait for the killer to shamble on over to them. In the *Scream* films, when the killer comes at someone, they don't cower. They push him down the stairs, or throw something at him, or punch him, which adds some realistic impact to the fantastically unrealistic stalker-movie setup.

Oh, and then of course this movie has Neve Campbell as the perpetually stalked Sidney Prescott, another huge plus (at least for me). The biggest problem is that after *Scream*'s great opening, the movie doesn't pick up again until it's nearly halfway over, in the video store scene. After that, though, it's totally nuts, building finally to one of the best endings of any horror film.

Movie: *** Disc: ***

SCREAM 2

In a weird inverse of the first movie, *Scream 2* plows through its storyline in overdrive all the way to the climax, where it then proceeds to fall apart. The opening here rivals that of the original for thrills, and Craven serves up a sinister vision of horror as a pop-culture phenomenon – not only does the killer wear a cloak and mask that can be bought in any store, now he's also sneaking around in a whole theater full of fans dressed just like him.

In fact, Scream 2 often gives you the sense that on this installment, Craven and returning scripter Williamson had figured out exactly what they wanted to do with the series. The prem-



ise - that the Woodsboro murders from the first Scream have been turned into a hit horror movie called Stab - allows for even more satire and references to cinematic cliches. And Craven crafts some of the best suspense sequences of his career here; the scene in which Sidney and friend have to climb over the apparently unconscious killer to get out of a crashed car is a iaw-dropper

Why it all collapses at the end, then, is still a

stumper, but part of the problem is definitely *Murder. She Wrote* Syndrome: when you spend a lot of time making all of your characters look like potential suspects, the final revelation of the killer's identity can be one hell of a letdown.

Movie: ★★★ Disc: ★★★



SCREAM 3

The saddest thing about a really good trilogy is seeing it end. Not just because the ride is finally coming to a complete stop, but also because the third film of the trilogy is almost always the weakest. It's interesting, then, that *Scream 3* is actually far more consistent than its immediate predecessor. But at the same time, it doesn't hit the highs of the first two films with the same reckless abandon; it's as if Craven has found a comfortable middle ground with this third film in the series.

Overall, he has the right idea, focusing once again on the nail-biting action-suspense sequences. Poor Ghostface might as well have been in *Fight Club* for all the times he winds up in a knock-down, drag-out brawl, and the emphasis on scaring the audience has shifted to getting their adrenaline going.

Though Williamson's absence is definitely felt here. *Scream 3* manages to outrun the creeping shadow of blandness that hangs over it with a story that draws from trilogies past while at the same time poking fun at them. The premise involves the filming of the fictional *Stab 3*, which is of course the final part of a trilogy itself, and based on the "true story" of the murders from the first movie. That's the kind of postmodern wackiness that makes for good *Scream* material, and the new Hollywood locale is perfect – where else could this series end up?

Movie: *** Disc: ***

BOTTOM LINE: A great way to own a first-rate series. Each movie's disc is loaded with commentaries, extra scenes, trailers and music videos, and the fourth disc, available only in this set, features a *Behind the Scream* documentary, out-takes, screen tests from the trilogy's lead actors, and a cool feature called "The Cutting Room" that lets you edit your own scene using your remote control. You can buy each *Scream* individually, but if you take your fandom seriously, this is the only way to go.

Overall: *****

- Steve Palopoli

THE RAY HARRYHAUSEN COLLECTION



THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD SINBAD AND THE EYE OF THE TIGER

Columbia TriStar, \$77.95

MOVIES: Fans of Ray Harryhausen's pioneering stop-motion special-effects work finally have reason to weep for joy, as his three Sinbad films have been oh-so-lovingly brought to DVD here. The first, The 7th Voyage of Sinbad, is up there with Harryhausen's other crowning achievement, Jason and the Argonauts, as one of the best fantasy films ever made. In fact, the skeleton-warrior scenario that pushed fason over the top got its start in a fantastic scene in 7th Voyage, though there's one skeleton instead of seven. But this movie's also got the amazing Cyclops, another of Harryhausen's best effects, as well as a tiny princess, the mythical Roc, and a battle between the Cyclops and a dragon. As for the story, it packs in as much action-adventure as possible, and Kerwin Mathews' Sinbad could out-badass Captain Kirk. The Golden Voyage of Sinbad continues in the same vein, and is nearly as good, with a fighting metal Kali statue as the Harryhausen highlight. By Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger, though, the series was getting tired, and even the requisite creature fight (saber-tooth versus troglodyte) is kind of lame.

FEATURES: There are no less than six featurettes and an in-depth documentary about Harryhausen and his work over the course of these three discs, and they cover every single aspect of his career in detail from start to finish. The films themselves look fantastic in their widescreen presentation.

BOTTOM LINE: A Harryhausen fan's wet dream, and a must-have set for lovers of great fantasy films.

- Steve Palopoli

7th Voyage of Sinbad

Movie: *** Disc: **** Golden Voyage of Sinbad

Movie: *** Disc: *** Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger

Movie: ★★ Disc: ★★★



HAROLD AND MAUDE

Paramount, \$29.99

MOVIE: A morbid bourgeois man-child falls for a woman who's old enough to be his grandmother. It sounds like sort of a geriatric version of The Graduate, but this cult fave is not about lust for flesh as much as it is a reawakened - cue Iggy Pop - lust for life. As Maude takes on Harold's bleak world view, the movie drives its point home, and does so with brilliantly dark humor.

FEATURES: 1.85 1 ratio widescreen, Dolby Digital 5.1 sound, two theatrical trailers. multiple languages. Fans of this film would have appreciated some more effort on the extras.

BOTTOM LINE: Although this movie is unforgettable, you may have forgotten exactly why. It'll hit you in the opening scene where Harold fakes hanging himself, and then again and again with his subsequent faked suicides, the car chases and the Jaguar/Hearse hybrid. Plus, there's Cat Stevens' soundtrack, which fills in the transitional spaces perfectly A classic film that's long overdue for another look.

- Scott Warden

Movie **** Disc ##



TITUS Fox, \$34.98

MOVIE: This flick should have been titled Titus & the Big Payback, not only because that's the plot, but also because it wouldn't seem that strange to pair ir up with a funky James Brown soundtrack. In his infamously nasty play, Shakespeare wraps up gross-out violence, loads of irrational behavior and strong characters in that bothersome "I have done thy mother"-speak. But director Julie Taymor delivers such a visually stunning and stylistically varied take on the play that the language doesn't lly get in the way.

FEATURES: 2.35:1 ratio widescreen, 5.1 Dolby Digital sound, multiple subtitles, Q&A with Taymor, an excellent 49minute documentary, commentary from star Anthony Hopkins and others

BOTTOM LINE: If you're going to inject this kind of brillians detail into a film that few bothered to see, you might as well go all out explaining how it came together for those that did. For once, a special edition that lives up to its name

- Scott Warden

Movie *** Disc ****



FRIED MOVIE

Anchor Bay, \$24.98

MOVIE: Before Airplane and The Naked Gun, the "ZAZ" team (David Zucker, Jim Abrahams and Jerry Zucker) wrote this spoofy collection of skits based on their Kentucky Fried Theater group. Most everybody remembers some thing from this movie, whether it's Big Jim Slade, frying the cat in pure Nesson oil, or boobs against the shower door in "Catholic School Girls In Trouble" (but, really, it's the boobs, isn't it?) FEATURES: 1.85:1 ratio

widescreen or full-screen versions, theatrical trailer, home movies made during the filming, and a blow-out commentary that features the three writers along with director John Landis and producer Robert K. Weiss

BOTTOM LINE: As a whole, The Kentucky Fried Movie has held up a hell of a lot better than anybody probably expected at the time. The truly out-there tastelessness of some of the humor still shocks more than 20 years later, and a majority of the two dozen bits still deliver the yuks.

- Steve Palopoli

Movie ***

THE BOTTOM SHELF

Plumbing the bowels of direct-to-video hell

THIS MONTH:

Economy-sized struggles between good and evil







TAGLINE: "Be afraid. For he is coming.

FORCES OF GOOD REPRESENTED BY: Direct-to-vid stalwart Christopher Lambert. Sadly, the former Highlander doesn't get to do any head-lopping as a Chicago policeman on the trail of a serial killer who carves numbers

FORCES OF EVIL REPRESENTED BY: A smarter-than-the-average-bear serial killer obsessed with rebuilding the body of Christ,

STRUGGLE FACTOR: Low. Crazy religious guy does nail a half dozen victims in particularly grotesque murders, but since he has to get everything done the week before Easter, he can only unleash so much evil. In any case, the ad copy on the box promises to "take you to the depths of the apocalypse," but we never anywhere near there.

EVIL SPEAKS: "Behold the glory of God! Sinners take heed! Soon the hand of judgment shall be upon ye!" Well, same to ye!

WHAT IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABOUT: Lambert hunts down the evil forces that have put the kibosh on his career.

BRAM STOKER'S SHADOWBUILDER

TAGLINE: "When God created light, the first shadow was born. Be afraid of the dark

FORCES OF GOOD REPRESENTED BY: Michael Rooker as a priest who shoots first and prays later, a small-town sheriff and his veterinarian girlfriend, and a whiny 12-year-

FORCES OF EVIL REPRESENTED BY: A demon who appears to be a high-ranking officer in the KISS Army, a swarm of flies, a cult of Catholic priests gone Satanic, and a drainage pipe that leads to hell.

STRUGGLE FACTOR: Moderate. Most of the

havoc is wreaked on a single small town, with sewer covers blowing off, people disintegrating, old men axing their wives, and children forming human pentagrams on the lawn Meanwhile, Rooker babbles about the demon's confusing plan to "build a door between his world and ours." It's not clear what exactly this would mean for all humankind, but I'm telling you, people, it ain't good.

EVIL SPEAKS: "You understand, 'Hell no' will soon be a contradiction in terms. Hell will no longer be denied!" Come again?

WHAT IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABOUT:

Bram Stoker returns from the dead and hunts down the evil forces that have been making craptastic "adaptations" of his work.

WARLOCK III: THE END OF INNOCENCE

TAGLINE: "Be afraid of guys who look remarkably like Julian Sands, but who cost much less to hire." Oh, all right, we made that

FORCES OF GOOD REPRESENTED BY:

Ashley Laurence as a college student who takes her buddies (all of whom look way too old to be in college) to "the old Miller house" to spend

FORCES OF EVIL REPRESENTED BY:

Bruce Payne as a warlock who gets to wear a smashingly hip designer leather jacket, even in his 17° century scenes.

STRUGGLE FACTOR: Pathetic. The warlock talks the apocalyptic talk, but all he really does through the whole movie is toy with and occasionally kill a few slackers. Hardly a shining moment for the forces of darkness EVIL SPEAKS: "Angels of hell, hear me! Prepare our dark prince for his new bridel

WHAT IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABOUT: Julian Sands vs. Bruce Payne in a Warlock Smackdown



It may be a rip-off of Se7en, but at least it's an ambitious rip-off. Director Russell Mulcahy of Highlander fame makes an effort to copy the creepy atmospherics and grim tone audiences loved the first time around, though it doesn't have one-quarter the energy of David Fincher's film. Soldiering through Lambert's signature shaky grasp of phonics is fun as always, of course. And those psychedelic camera angles really leave you feelin' groovy as victims are found hanging in a meat locker or sitting on the toilet with no head

WHAT WE LEARNED

It's easier for good to triumph when evil's working on a shoestring budget.

- Steve Palopoli

For your drooling pleasure: the latest DVD players, TVs, sound systems and home theater gear.



Sony's new PlayStation2 is a cutting-edge videogame system and DVD player combined. Time, then, to swap all those different gadgets for one ultra-sexy box that does it all?

hen Sony's PlayStation2 launches in the US on October 26, it'll be the biggest thing to happen to videogaming since... well, since the last biggest thing about a year ago, when Sega's Dreamcast debuted. But the PlayStation2 (PS2 for short) is unlike the Dreamcast, or any other

console ever made, for one reason that has both videogame and movie fans drooling: when it's not functioning as a state-of-the-art gaming system, it does double duty as a DVD player.

Sony's sexy little black box is a bona fide example of the "multimedia convergence" you've been hearing so much about - it's the first affordable set-top box that can play two totally different types of entertainment. That's pretty cool, and when you factor in that you won't have to ditch your old games collection to upgrade (PS2 will play all your original PlayStation titles just fine), you're looking at a pretty sweet deal. So, the question is: is PlayStation2 the holy grail for people looking to save a few bucks and grab up a game system and DVD player in one box for \$299? Well, we've already been playing with a system imported from Japan (it's been out there for a while, natch), and as a game console, PS2 is a bit of a no-brainer - technologically, it kicks the current rival systems from Sega and Nintendo into the gutter, and Sony's Godzilla-like industry power will ensure plenty of quality games. But as anyone who's tried to use their PC's DVD-ROM player to watch movies knows, the picture quality and overall performance on those multimedia systems is often well below what you can get from a dedicated player.

The good news is that the PS2 stacks up surprisingly well as a hometheater rig. While it lacks some high-end features and is strictly regionally encoded (a nice little bug that allowed some early Japanese units to play discs from anywhere in the world has unfortunately since been zapped), the basic playback quality is certainly on a par with what you'd get from a dedicated player in the \$299 range. The only real disadvantage to the PlayStation2's DVD side, in fact, is the

lack of a real remote. You'll feel like you've been blasted back to 1982 as you're forced to play, pause and access menu features via the wired game controller. But don't despair! There are a whole bunch of proper infrared remotes on the way from various manufacturers. You'll have to lay out around 40 extra bucks for the wireless privileges that conventional DVD owners take for granted, but how many of them can claim their system also plays cutting-edge videogames? Huh? How many?

Looks-wise, the PlayStation2 is extremely bachelor-pad-friendly. It's matte black, covered in cooling fins, and boasts an enigmatic, almost featureless front - just a few subtle inputs for controllers and memory cards, eject and power/reset buttons, and a sleek blue LED. Particularly cool: while the system sits nicely on a shelf the old-fashioned way, it's also designed to stand on its end like a vertical tower, which looks even better when you add the optional blue support struts.

The really cool stuff, however, lies in the upgradeable future of the PS2's DVD capabilities. Sony has hinted strongly about releasing hard drive and modem add-ons next year, which would allow you to download movies and games on a pay-per-view basis. The hard drive also opens up all kinds of Replay TV/TiVOstyle possibilities. Drooling yet? You should be.

Bottom line: PlayStation2 is a seriously seductive all-in-one gadget. Hardcore home-theater nuts will sneer at the system's no-frills DVD performance, but if you're a PlayStation owner looking to upgrade and join the DVD revolution, a large chunk of manna from heaven just



- Chris Charla

GAMES WITHOUT FRONTIERS

Five launch PlayStation2 titles you'll definitely want to find space for on your DVD shelf (they come in the same type of case as the movies do - handy, huh?)



RIDGE RACER V

(Namco)

IN A NUTSHELL: The world's best racing game gets even better - more tracks than ever before, more cars and better graphics at an eye-blistering 60 frames per second. PARTICULARLY COOL: A built-in odometer that keeps track of how far you've driven and unlocks extra cars as a bonus for hitting distance milestones. A split-screen mode allows two players to race each other.



MADDEN NFL FOOTBALL

(EA Sports)

IN A NUTSHELL: Fans of classic Sega-era John Madden Football action rejoice - word is this PS2 version is the best ever. Squint a little and you'll think you're watching a real game on TV. Yup, it looks that good. PARTICULARLY COOL: A full franchise mode lets you play general manager and run team affairs from the front office.



TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT

(Namco)

IN A NUTSHELL: Soul Calibur, your fifteen minutes are up - 3D fighting comes home in this updated classic with more characters than ever and a tag-team fighting mode. PARTICULARLY COOL: You can break opponents' arms with combo moves. And if you beat all the bad guys, there's a secret Tekken Bowling game to check out.



SSX

(EA Sports)

IN A NUTSHELL: Snowboarding games were so popular on the original PlayStation they created a genre all their own - SSX will be the first for the next-generation system, and it's looking incredible.

PARTICULARLY COOL: The game's hi-tech snowboard-interactive techno soundtrack the throbbing backbeat changes in sync with your gnarly tricks and somersaults.

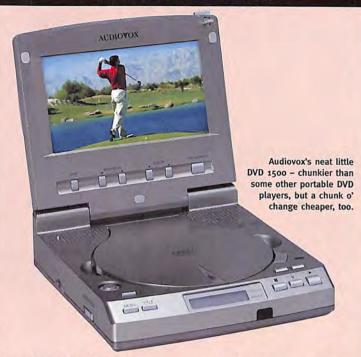


TIME SPLITTER

IN A NUTSHELL: The creators of the Nintendo 64 blockbuster Golden Eve jumped ship to set up their own shop and make this very tasty-looking 3D action epic.

PARTICULARLY COOL: This one's been shrouded in secrecy so far, but early word is that Time Splitter is the most promising of all the titles being prepped to release alongside the system itself in October.

A First Look At New Stuff You Want



AUDIOVOX DVD 1500

Sometimes freedom means not having to watch the in-flight movie. And the days of being stuck with Air Bud: Golden Receiver to fulfill your movie needs in transit may very well be over as the DVD revolution expands to portable players. Audiovox is pushing ahead with its DVD 1500, a new portable model hitting stores in October. It retails for \$799 and features a cigarette lighter adapter and AC-to-DC switching adapter for plugging into

whatever power sources you can find, a 2.2-hour battery for when you can't find any and a full-function remote control. The 1500 has a 5.8inch screen, and fits right in with the rest of Audiovox's portable line, which appears to have become the company's

electronics specialty. Previous models have been more specifically designed for vehicles - ready to hang from a seat or fit with the dash - but the 1500 offers more versatility while retaining the small, unobtrusive design. Looks sharp, too.

audio/video players. The top-of-the-line DV-4900 plays DVD-audio discs, DVDvideo discs and audio CDs, and is designed for both movie fans and audiophiles. The player works with Dolby Digital and DTS surround sound, and features two five-disc carousels, with the added bonus that it'll play one disc while you add or remove any or all of the other four. The end result should be a boon to those looking for a single high-end player for their movies and music. No details on price yet.



PIONEER HTZ-55DV

Pioneer is up to bat in the hometheater space race, but the HTZ-55DV Executive Home Theater System (\$925 SRP) doesn't take up too much space. With five speakers, an amplifier and a DVD player at the center of it all, it

could be an easy solution for those looking to get in on surround sound. The built-in DTS/Dolby Digital decoder has a 5.1 channel amplifier and an "advanced theater

mode" that lets you choose between standard, musical, drama, action, virtual, surround and rear-wide settings. The topper is a nice big subwoofer.



Multi-disc goodness: Kenwood's DV-4900

KENWOOD DV-4900

The audio experts at Kenwood are unveiling their first line of DVD



THULE PR250B

PRE-AMP/PROCESSOR (\$2,995



If there's one metal that gets the heart racing, it must be aluminum. Sure, platinum's nice, and gold was cool in the '80s (especially on your wrist), but when it comes to high performance, most high-end audio manufacturers need look no further than aluminum.

In the world of home theater, there are really two ways to go when putting together a sound set-up. The less expensive option is the use of an A/V receiver or integrated amplifier, which offers your controlling, switching, processing and amplification in one box. While this is a viable option for many people, there's another alternative that offers better performance: a high-end pre-amp/processor, which does everything but amplify your audio signals. The amplification is taken care of by an outboard multichannel amplifier, which generally

board multichannel amplifier, which generally offers higher performance and a richer home theater experience. This option is usually the way to go, cost permitting.

This of Departs is a company known for

Thule of Denmark, a company known for its high-end approach to audio, has just launched its foray into home theater with an amazingly sleek aluminum component. The PR250B pre-amp/processor offers all the latest bells and whistles, right down to Dolby Digital and DTS processing, a ton of S-video inputs and outputs, as well as 2 CAT-5 control outputs for connection to extra equipment. Finished in a sleek black aluminum case, it's as much a treat for the eyes as it is for the ears.

Setting up the unit is a cinch. The multitude of S-video inputs and outputs connect to your TV easily. The onscreen display also helps immeasurably, since it's good to be able to read what you're doing on a big screen. The menus are easily configurable, and are completed within a minute or two. The front panel of the unit is easy to read, too. Little red lights highlight which source has been selected, as well as what surround mode you're currently in. All in all, it's ergonomically sound.

The remote control also works great. It might not be fancy, but it allows control from virtually anywhere in the room, thanks to the very sensitive infrared receiver on the PR250B. It has direct selection buttons for each source – a nice touch. For example, you can select "SAT" and it will directly switch all audio and video signals to your dish. This is actually pretty rare on high-end pre-amps, so it's a welcome feature.

OK. so it's easy to set up, easy to control, but how does it sound? Well, on 5.1 movie material, we were blown away. Dialogue from the center speaker was very impressive, clean and undistorted even at high levels. Surround activity was also coherent, and the PR250B really created a sonic environment, rather than just a collection of speakers in a room. The .1 subwoofer channel also offered high performance, and smooth integration into the rest of the performance. On Sarah McLachlan's Mirrorball DVD, an especially challenging music 5.1 DVD, the diva's voice rang true on each and every song, making us feel as though

we were actually in the concert hall with the band.

Especially notable were the drums and the

specially notable were the drums and the electric bass, as they sounded completely realistic, particularly during the drum rolls.

On conventional movie DVDs, our results were the same. On the Dolby Digital 5.1-remastered version of *Apocalypse Now*, the famous scene where they're storming the beach to the strains of Wagner sounds incredible. Explosions are ferociously realistic, and bass is alarmingly real. Dialogue is very

well rendered, allowing you to hear the actors above the excitement of the scene.

In case you feel like listening to good old-fashioned stereo music, you're also in luck. The digital-to-analog converters inside the PR250B are excellent, affording a very musical quality to the programming that gets sent its way. Listening to Peter Gabriel's new *OVO* CD was a pleasure, mostly because I like it, but also because it's incredibly challenging for an audio system. The Thule passed with flying colors.

Also offered by Thule is the matching PA250B five-channel amplifier (\$2,995), which equally suits the pre-amplifier's prowess. With all five channels driven at 8 ohms, the 250B outputs 100 powerful watts per channel. In stereo mode, with two channels operating, the power jumps up to 250 watts per channel. Weighing in at a whopping 44 pounds, this visually diminutive component will shock all the senses.

If you're looking for a high-end system with all the bells and whistles, look no further than Thule. Sure, not everyone on the block is gonna recognize it, but isn't that much cooler anyway?

- Jeff Cherun

Hardware

LINN CLASSIK

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER/CD PLAYER/TUNER

\$1,950 - \$1,995



In this ever-evolving world of greed, disposability and lack of value, it's nice to see a product that gives you so much for your hard-earned dollar. Linn, a manufacturer of high-end audio hardware from Scotland, has just updated its incredible Classik, and the new model is a rare breed in that it offers its services as a CD player, an AM/FM tuner and a control hub for your stereo system. No external amplifiers are required to get the party going: all you need are some speakers (preferably Linn's excellent offerings), and you'll be good to go.

The Classik (\$1,950 in black, \$1,995 in all other colors) ably serves up a very healthy 75-wattsper-channel of amplification, powering even the larger speakers. Another thoughtful touch is the inclusion of a timer to wake you up in the morning, so it can double as a high-end alarm clock. Not too shabby.

Setting up the unit is a relatively painless experience. Simply plug in a pair of speaker cables (supplied), hook up a pair of speakers to the other ends, and you're all set. It just doesn't get any simpler than that. For fine-tuning, you can use the remote to adjust the bass and treble controls, but Linn's wonderfully neutral soundstage probably won't require these transgressions, unless you've paired the system up with some crappy bargain-bin PC speak-

ers. Of course, that would be a crime against nature.

The other nice thing about setting up the Classik is the fact that all that goodness is crammed into one diminutive chassis. Therefore, it's easy to find room for the relatively small footprint that the Classik requires. All in all, this is an exceptionally good-sounding product that's built like a bank vault, and it's sure to provide years and years of listening enjoyment for all who encounter its melodious tunes. Due to both its minimal size and its self-evident value, why not have one in every room of the house?

- Jeff Cherun Rating: * * * *

JVC XV-523GD

DVD PLAYER \$299.95





JVC has been a strong propagator of the DVD format, offering well-built machines at very attractive prices, and its latest offering, the XV-523GD, is a handsome piece of electronic gear. Its design is both sleek and modern, with all the usual trimmings. Our review model came finished in a "champagne" (i.e. cool silvery-brown) exterior, which is hopefully the direction most manufacturers will head in. The matte black finish that other manufacturers use is starting to look a bit skanky and over-done, while a champagne finish exudes opulence and class, even on a relatively inexpensive unit like the XV-523GD.

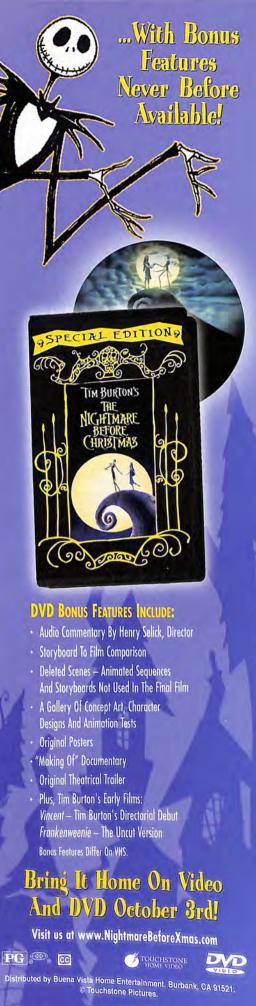
As far as amenities go, the XV-523GD has got it all. It has component video outputs, useful in hooking up to a commensurate TV, which will improve picture quality noticeably. JVC also threw in both coaxial and Toslink digital outputs, mandatory for today's compatibility issues. For example, if you've got a Dolby Digital/DTS receiver that only has a Toslink digital input, and your DVD player only

has a coaxial digital output, you're screwed. But with the options and versatility that JVC has included, you're ready to rock either way.

Another nice feature that JVC has thrown in is the ability to pass through DTS audio. In recent years, only the highend DVD players had this feature, and it's nice to see that this feature's finally making it into reasonably-priced units.

As far as performance goes, the JVC was also very impressive. Video quality was excellent, especially in anamorphic 16:9 widescreen mode. Color saturation was pure, without any noticeable noise or bleeding. Shadow detail was also favored on test material, never floundering during the video torture tests. Analog audio quality on CDs was also pretty good, sounding much like a \$400 stand-alone CD player. At the end of the day, we can wholeheartedly recommend this little baby to anybody looking for a great DVD player at a great price.

- Jeff Cherun Rating: * * * *



The current crop of movie-related tomes dissected, scrutinized and, yes, even read.

BURT LANCASTER

AN AMERICAN LIFE

BY KATE BUFORD (Alfred A. Knopf)

\$27.50

"Burt Lancaster is so much a part of the fabric of American popular culture," writes biographer Kate Buford, "that he blends into our collective memory like a famous uncle who was once a great athlete." Damn right!

Lancaster was a self-made entertainment icon who moved through the showbiz landscape with a savvy grace, a disguised literacy and a raw physicality that puts all of today's so-called Hollywood "hunks" to shame. Yup, Burt was a real man all right, and this is his machismo-packed true story.

Time was, a hundred years or so ago, that novels gave us a picture of the world and how it made and changed people. Nowadays, it's biographies like this. And Buford's writing is terrific - when she describes the look and feel of 1930s New York, for example, it's like you can almost smell the place.

With his "hypermasculine American good looks," Lancaster worked virtually every showbiz gig imaginable, from the circus in the 1930s as a performer at the bar, to the Federal Theater Project, to films (where he debuted in 1946 as "a big dumb Swede" in Mark Hellinger's The

Killers). From 1946 to 1990, Lancaster, as Buford writes, alternated the "artsy with the commercial movie." His cinematic impact is indelible - who can forget him as the venomous gossip columnist J.J. Hunsecker in The Sweet Smell of Success? Or the eponymous hell-fire and damnation evangelist and womanizer Elmer Gantry? It was in

> roles like these that Lancaster embodied American archetypes so well, he seemed to disappear into the characters. In all, he starred in over 70 films before

passing away in 1994 at age 80.

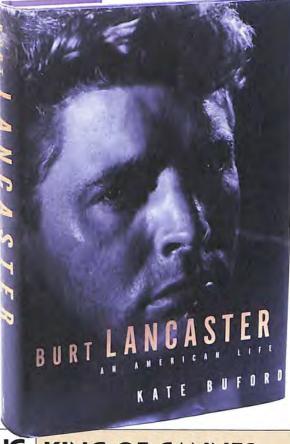
Buford's excellent biography has a cultural breadth and artistry that's perfect for its subject, a man whose "destiny was to look like the American hero but to grow into the American man he

really was." He did it on the big screen, in mythic scale "telling his story back to his audience, who in turn saw its own story." All in all, one to read - there's even a picture of Burt's bare butt on the back cover, if you're into that sort of thing.

- Ray Zone ****

I Hated, Hated,

This Movie



I HATED, HATED, HATED THIS MOVIE

By Roger Ebert (Andrews McMeel, \$14.95)

It's kind of ironic, don't you think, that this collection of Roger Ebert's most passionate put-downs is virtually criticproof. What's not to like, for God's sake? Certainly, you'll find plenty to disagree with here, and at times you'll want to kick The Sweatered One in the butt. But don't pretend the scathing reviews of films you can't believe Ebert would have the nerve to scathe aren't the very ones you're going to flip to first.

There are contradictions here and there, and overly moralistic rants aplenty, but it's to this legendary critic's credit that there are only a handful of films here about which he clearly failed to get a clue (Starship Troopers, Blue Velvet, etc). For the most part, this is a collection of entertaining essays about genuinely lame movies.

Maybe it's the way he goes from the fairly forgiving critic we know and love to a bitchy heckler who claims that one film "does not improve on the sight of a blank screen viewed for the same length of time." Maybe it's the way he seems so sincerely exasperated when a bad movie shears two hours off his life. In any case, finding out why he hates these movies so damn much makes for a rollicking good read.

- Steve Palopoli

FEATURE FILMMAKING AT USED-CAR PRICES

By Rick Schmidt (Penguin Books, \$16.95)

OK, how many people out there do NOT want to make movies? Raise your hands. That's what I thought. Listen up, then: if you think you've got a great idea for a movie, here's a book that will show you how to make it for the price of a new car.

When the first edition of Feature Filmmaking came out in 1988, it conveniently coincided with the "indie" filmmaking revolution. The new 2000 edition claims "that anyone with the will and desire can create a movie right from his or her home or office."

Amazingly, Rick Schmidt really does show you how. And he shares some funny and harrowing stories from

the trenches of his battles to create films outside of the Hollywood model. You don't have to be a moviemaker to appreciate the heretical attitude or the axe-murdering antics of the studios included here with a brash foreword by Ray Carney.

Schmidt is a fiercely independent filmmaker who has produced numerous features and DV films that are about as far removed from the Hollywood system as you can get. In the years since the first edition of this book appeared, Schmidt writes, "this new digital age has finally handed over the means of production of images to the people." Now you've got no excuse.

- Ray Zone ***



KING OF CANNES

By Stephen Walker (Algonquin Books, \$21.95)

When Stephen Walker explains to a British producer that he's a documentary filmmaker making a film about the Cannes Film

Festival, the producer asks the obvious question: "Why would anyone want to do that?"

Why, indeed. Walker sacrifices 18 months of his life, a considerable sum of the BBC's money and the life of several trees in an attempt to answer that question. Readers brave enough to plod through this book may have another question for Walker: Who cares?

This could have been a great adventure and a good read, but Walker doesn't have the momentum or passion to sustain his own vision - in fact, he himself makes constant references to this. He describes at one point how his six-year-old daughter said at bedtime,

'Daddy, just what exactly is your film about?," and then reveals to the reader that he is "at a loss for words" for an answer. And he's not kidding.

That's not to say that King of Cannes is all bad. There are a few amusing incidents, and the book's highlight details how Walker wrangled his way on board a yacht for the biggest party at Cannes - given by pornographers. He also candidly reveals how he and his crew are banned from Cannes. Overall, Walker has a good story to tell; he just can't figure out how to tell it.

- Kathleen Fairweather

Web sites, videogames and all that other high-tech, movie-related cyber-stuff.

Multimedia

THE GOSSIP SHOWS

The Internet's rife with sites providing salacious gossip and unofficial news of upcoming movies - but which ones are worth going to? TOTAL MOVIE surfs three of the best...



AIN'T IT COOL NEWS

Appearances aren't everything, but it has to be said that Ain't It Cool News is one butt-ugly website.

Muddy colors, weird typography, grammar and spelling mistakes out the wazoo.... but while the site might look clumsy, AICN is a simmerin' hotbed of news and rumors. Its priority is getting the juiciest tidbits first, no matter how small, so the site appeals more to hardcore fans than the casual moviegoer, but the approach has landed them some bona fide scoops - AICN revealed that Christopher Lee had landed a part in Episode II long before Lucas confirmed it.

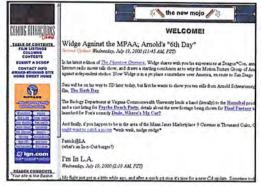
AICN's anonymous "spies" report in with everything from script reviews to Polaroids smuggled off movie sets. There's often a lot of meandering and whimsical guff to wade through, but the occasional choice nugget makes it all worthwhile.



DARK HORIZONS

Dark Horizons delivers the goods just as well as Ain't It Cool News, but with style. Run out of Sydney, Australia, by 23-year-old Garth Franklin, the site boasts the latest gossip and an exhaustive film index listing nearly every title due out for this year and next, along with links to cast and crew, stills and, in most cases, downloadable trailers.

Franklin's location Down Under doesn't seem to have hindered his gossip-gathering efforts - there's almost as much hot scuttlebutt to be found here as on Ain't It Cool News, with the bonus of not having to fight through insanefive-year-old-with-a-crayon web design to get to it. With plenty of stuff posted daily, and a forum for fans to express their adoration or disdain for either a film or the site, Dark Horizons gets the job done in a nice, neat package



COMING ATTRACTIONS

www.corona.bc.ca/films/homepage.html

Now in case anyone out there accuses us of giving Coming Attractions a glowing review because head honcho Patrick Sauriol also writes for TOTAL MOVIE,

it's the other way around: we hooked up with Patrick and his cronies because they have the best movie news site anywhere on the web. Gossip is sorted by movie - select from the massive list of titles, and you're treated to a huge archive of scoops and reports.

Coming Attractions is the movie site for fans who don't care about pretentious reviews or celebrity rumors, but simply want to catch up on the latest news and be entertained at the same time. Funny, informative and just plain packed with good stuff. CA cuts the crap and tells it like it is. No wonder we like it so much.

MUST-SURF SITE O' THE MONTH



Every now and again when surfing

the web, a real gem of a site lands in

your lap. Mr. Skin is one such diamond in

with no less a goal than to assemble every

the rough, a comprehensive web archive

nude'n'rude scene ever filmed by every

actress in every movie ever made. From

Pamela Anderson and Patricia Arquette to

Renee Zellweger and Catherine Zeta-Jones,

if they've ever stripped down on screen you'll find still images and. in many cases. video footage of it here. The archive currently boasts over 15,000 stills and 2,000 streaming video clips - and it's getting bigger every day

So forget about those crummy "celebrity fake" sites; this is the real thing, and it's

attracting the finest people - it turns out that a certain TOTAL MOVIE writer who will remain nameless (as long as those checks keep coming, buddy) is a regular visitor. Mr. Skin also boasts guides to the latest skin-tastic movies, reviews, merchandise, top ten lists, Skinzine magazine, and reader forums. All this skin comes at a price, however - it's \$19.95 per month, but maybe you can get somebody you know to let you borrow their password. Like we did.

VIDEOGAMES



X-MEN: MUTANT ACADEMY

PlayStation/Out now/\$39.99

Long before Fox's X-Men movie comes home to DVD, Activision is giving fans of Marvel's mighty mutants a chance to take control of their favorite characters and beat the hell out of each other in X-Men: Mutant Academy. The cast is an interesting mix of movie and comic book, featuring nonmovie-stars Gambit and Beast alongside Cyclops, Wolverine, Magneto, Storm and the like. Toad is particularly cool, obviously based heavily on Ray Park's movie persona (complete with green phlegm and some frightening tongue action), but sadly, Rogue's nowhere to be found.

A fighting game with remarkably easy controls and great graphics. Mutant Academy really brings the feel of the comic books to life with authentic locations such as Professor X's danger room and The Savage Lands, as well as a huge gallery of X-Men art from the last 30 years to drool over during load times. The "Academy" mode has Professor X teaching aspiring X-Men how to perform the various combos and super attacks with the game's three-punch, threekick control scheme and soon even the most novice of fight fans will find themselves in the two-player mode. pounding the X out of some villainous evil mutants - a.k.a. their friends and neighbors.

- Daniel Erickson



Total MOVIE 107

Hey, the screen may be smaller, but it's what you do with it that counts.

it's what you do with it that counts.

THE WITCH IS BACK

As the Blair Witch sequel hits movie theaters this Halloween, Showtime and the Sci-Fi Channel are bringing it back home with two spooky spin-offs...

When The Blair Witch Project became last year's surprise horror hit in theaters, everyone looked to the Internet for an explanation. But while it's true that Artisan rewrote the rules of online hype, they also picked up some healthy buzz from Curse of the Blair Witch, the Sci-Fi Channel TV special that took unused backstory footage from the movie and shaped it into a fake documentary that convincingly laid out the fictional legend on which the film was "based."

Interestingly enough, the trendy Blair Witch backlash didn't touch Curse (some now remember it as better than the film), and it became Sci-Fi's most-watched original special. So it's safe to say both Artisan and the network have high hopes for another crossover hit with Blair Witch 2: Shadow of Blair Witch, an hour-long special which debuts on the Sci-Fi channel October 22 at 8pm EST. Shadow, of course, is being tied in with the release of the movie sequel Blair Witch 2: Book of Shadows (in theaters October 27) the same way Curse played off the original film. Like the first special, Shadow follows the storyline of the movie from an "investigative report" angle, focusing on a murder trial that supposedly took place after the events in the sequel.

This summer, Showtime jumped on the the Blair Witch bandwagon with The Burkittsville 7, another smart mockumentary timed to coincide with the cable premiere of The Blair Witch Project, which fleshed the legend out further, and even built a bridge to the second movie with a subplot about a mysterious "witch language." Many will say these TV take-offs succeed because they successfully mimic those paranormal and true-crime specials we see all over the tube, but that's only partially true. Actually, Curse of the









Blair Witch and The Burkittsville 7 succeeded because they both seemed so much more real than most "reality" shows.

The difference is skillful technique; for instance, a typical paranormal show would have had one freak after another babbling endlessly about why the Blair Witch has to exist; they're notorious for freezing out any trace of skepticism. What the producers of these

shows never seem to get is that all this rabid propaganda only makes us laugh at what they're doing, whereas the element of doubt adds some credibility. But the folks behind The Burkittsville 7 understood this perfectly: early on, a character named Chris Carrazco ("film archivist") says, "A child drowned in the river, and people attributed that to the Blair Witch. And there's absolutely nothing to substantiate that!" Meanwhile, the camera is panning over the eeriest river you've ever seen, and then cuts to some evil-looking etchings, and suddenly the natural reaction as a viewer is, "Wake up, Chris! How many kids will have to drown in that river before people like you realize that the Blair Witch is behind all this?"

This carefully crafted more-real-than-real approach comes straight from the playbook director-writers Eduardo Sanchez and Daniel Myrick used for the first Blair Witch movie. It didn't work for everybody on the big screen, but on TV, it's easier to have fun with it, and still be kind of creeped out at the same time. The fact that these specials now seem to be even more important than the films themselves in building up the ever-expanding Blair Witch mythos just goes to show that fake truth is stranger than real fiction.

- Steve Palopoli



FIRST TARGET

TBS, October

Finally, a sequel to First Daughter, the highest-rated basic-cable movie of all time. from the same creative team. Daryl Hannah as a Secret Service agent and Doug Savant as her river-guide boyfriend race to stop a presidential assasination.

SWEEPERS

USA, September Dolph Lundgren sweeps up the thugs as a humanitarian who goes rogue when his son is killed in a landmine accident in Angola.

FOR LOVE OR COUNTRY

HBO, November

Ay caramba! Andy Garcia plays real-life Cuban trumpeter Arturo Sandoval. who must "devise a desperate plan to defect" when Fidel Castro's crazy Commies try to blow his career.

We call it TVD: Small-screen classics getting a new lease of life on digitial disc



GET A LIFE!, VOL. 1

Rhino, \$19.95

If all you ever saw was Cabin Boy, you have no idea why anyone ever cared about Chris Elliott. But now it can be told: four episodes of Elliott's 1990-92 TV show Get a Life have been collected on DVD. In retrospect, Elliott's schtick here was really a dry run for Tom Green, in a sitcom setting. As 30-yearold paperboy Chris Peterson, Elliott is a comic idiot savant, a manic dork set loose (and repeatedly getting himself killed) in his own twisted version of reality. The rapid-fire absurd humor is hit and miss, but Elliott's brilliance is in making you laugh by saying or doing the thing you least expect. And like the Monty Python guys, he knows how to milk his material - it's funny when he gets hit by a car (trust us on this), but it's way funnier when he gets hit the sixth time. The disc features extra material that was originally cut from the shows for time.



The Burkittsvill

7: bewitching

LAND OF THE LOST

Rhino, \$19.95

Children's television has served up some crud in the past, but nothing so brain-freezingly bad as Land of the Lost, which ran on NBC in the mid-'70s. Sid and Marty Krofft's tale of "Marshall, Will and Holly on a routine expedition" that ends up with the hapless family stranded in a weird quasi-prehistoric world is so staggeringly inept in every department - writing, acting, special effects, you name it - that it actually makes for pretty amusing viewing. Perfect for hopeless nostalgics who harbor fond memories of Saturday morning TV marathons in their pajamas, or anyone planning a cheesy retronight, the disc features four of the series' better-known episodes, along with new interviews with Sid and Marty and members of the cast



STAR TREK: THE ORIGINAL SERIES. VOL. 13 & 14

Paramount, \$19.99

For those who've never heard of this little-known show, it's about a compulsive womanizer and his elf sidekick exploring the galaxy hundreds of years from now in a desperate quest for the colorful polyester blends they crave. Okay, so Star Trek is only one of the coolest TV universes in history, and for us original-series purists, the all-too-short run of Gene Roddenberry's first Trek effort has been often imitated but never duplicated. Two episodes are included on each of these discs: "The Devil in the Dark" (possibly the best episode of the series) and "This Side of Paradise" on Vol. 13, with "The City on the Edge of Forever" (another top contender and probably the most well-known episode) and "Errand of Mercy" on Vol. 14. The shows look fantastic, but the only extras are the original TV trailers - someone needs to be blasted into the neutral zone for not including more goodies.



"At the edge of the Earth, the search is on for something out of this world," intones narrator leff Bridges. Is it aliens? Dracula? Nope, a mammoth. (Why is it never Dracula?) In this Discovery Channel documentary, explorers go looking for a frozen mammoth buried in Siberia. It's 90 long minutes of typical overblown nature-show stuff, with Bridges forced to give it up for lines like "The men are closing in their prehistoric prey, and they wonder if he knows." Um, probably not, as he's been dead and buried beneath the tundra for thousands of years. The disc is decked out with an impressive glob of mammoth facts and background on the expedition, but this package is for science nuts only.

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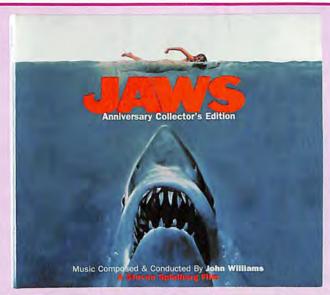
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Pumping up the volume on the latest movie music

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ARY COLLECTOR'S EDITION John Williams (Decca)

lassical snobs may turn up their Csnoots at modern music, but any way you look at it, John Williams beat Beethoven by two notes. Check it out: you can name Ludwig's most recognizable work, the Fifth Symphony, in four notes, but it takes only two to identity the opening of Williams' main theme for Jaws - a creepy little da-dum from the basses and it's everybody out of the pool.

But after years of popculture overexposure, even fans may have forgotten that this landmark soundtrack still has plenty of bite. Luckily, the new 25th Anniversary remastered edition offers the most complete presentation of the music yet. Williams himself has edited cues and shuffled the order so that the whole score comes off as a single complete work, and the result is a suite that's as solid as you'd expect from one of moviedom's greatest living

composers. Additions include the "Father and Son" music, a haunting, chimelike underscore from one of the film's memorable emotional moments, which, reprised and developed with "End

> Titles," establishes one of the disc's strongest themes. Also included is music from the climactic chase sequences that was trimmed out of the

original release. In the end, this smartly packaged re-issue nearly doubles the running time of the soundtrack, shaping an

already classic score into a gripping stand-alone work loaded with strong musical imagery. It's a refresher course in why Jaws made us scared to go in the water, and an overdue snapshot of a legendary composer just reaching the height of his powers.

- Rob Pratt





X-MEN Michael Kamen (Decca)

Michael Kamen is equally known for his film scores and his work with pop artists; just last year, he did his damnedest to make Metallica listenable on their S&Mdisc. But you won't hear any pop songs on this X-Men soundtrack, because it's just the score. No random song from the credits, no "inspired by" castaways. What you get on this disc are orchestral pieces that worked nicely in the film, creating the usual moods and tension and accentuating action, but they can be jarring when forced to stand alone. Hey, what did you expect from a sci-fi action flick? Here Kamen's decided to meld the cascading darkness of Batman with flourishes of The Matrix's cyber-punk industrial vibe to great effect. But only true X-geeks could appreciate these tracks stripped of their visual context.

- Scott Warden



SCARY MOVIE

The movie may have been funny, but this disc is genuinely scary. You get hit on two fronts: derivative alternative bands and generally whack rap entries. You probably haven't heard most of the acts on the first half, but you'll swear you have. Just as Scary Movie ages the Scream films Save Ferris mimics No Doubt, Radford does a Matchbox 20 impression, Bender is Nine Inch Nails, and Fountains of Wayne come off like Liam Gallagher fronting Austin Powers' house band. Just as things are looking up with The Ramones' classic "I Wanna Be Sedated," the disc pivots into half a dozen rap tracks that almost make the first half seem decent. Weak selections from Public Enemy and Tupac are disappointing and the efforts from Lifelong and Royce the 5'9" are just plain embarrassing.

- Scott Warden



TIMECODE

Various (Milan)

About the last thing you'd expect from the soundtrack to director Mike Figgis' innovative Timecode is a jazz odyssev. But the fact that Figgis, who wrote the score pieces here with Anthony Marinelli, didn't go with, say, a futuristic techno soundtrack is further proof that he's interested more in the traditional storytelling aspects of his split-screen film than the gimmicky experimental visuals. Unfortunately, the music itself is mostly straight-up jazz-rock rehash. As for the pop songs, Skin's "Comfort of Strangers" is a pale imitation of Sade, while Everything But the Girl's "Single" is the disc's stand-out track. If you're ready for something really traditional though. the selection from Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 5 is a nice closer

- Steve Palopoli



ME, MYSELF & IRENE

Various (Elektra)

Considering the premise of this flick, it's no wonder the soundtrack has a split personality, too. Half of it is Steely Dan covers and the other half is, er, not Steely Dan covers. OK, so who does The Dan right? Oddly enough, only the guitar solo-riffic version of "Bodhisattva" by Brian Setzer Orchestra and Marvelous 3's glam take on "Reelin" In the Years" really stand out. Ben Folds Five takes their usual wuss trip with "Barrytown" and Wilco sounds surprisingly listless on "Any Major Dude Will Tell You." Toss in some original road kill from Third Eye Blind (why won't they go away?) and Hootie & The Blowfish (you only thought they were dead!) and you've got yourself a tough disc to get your heads around.

- Scott Warden



THE PATRIOT John Williams (Hollywood)

The Patriot is the kind of epic that spends a lot of time establishing an atmosphere, and one that's more than willing to play on flag-waving cliches. John Williams' score for the film also takes its time to get to the action, and leans just as much on tried-and-true Americanisms. But with only a few exceptions the opening theme, glaringly -Williams avoids musical missteps. Despite the Revolutionary War backdrop, the score is more contemplative than bombastic. That doesn't mean it's not without rousing moments, however. At times the music brims with a breathless enthusiasm lifted from Aaron Copland, and when it gets down to the battling of the redcoats. Williams has the

orchestra thundering like a

cavalry charge - Rob Pratt



THE KLUMPS

Various (Def Jam)

Seemingly compiled with the sole purpose of shifting units, rather than actually featuring music "inspired" by the motion picture, this soundtrack is enough to make listeners who haven't yet seen The Klumps think that the movie's some kind of edgy urban drama with plenty of sexy moments and gritty tension. C'mon, we're talking about one of the year's biggest slapstick comedies here - we're not looking for Weird Al Yankovic, but a little humor would've been nice (and no, the inclusion of Sisqo's "Thong Song" doesn't count). But the album covers a whole spectrum of tastes - with Janet Jackson and R. Kelly on the softer side, and DMX, Eminem and Redman serving up the harder beats, The Klumps ultimately succeeds as a high-quality, albeit eclectic, compilation.

- Tom Bejgrowicz



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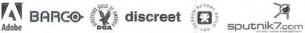
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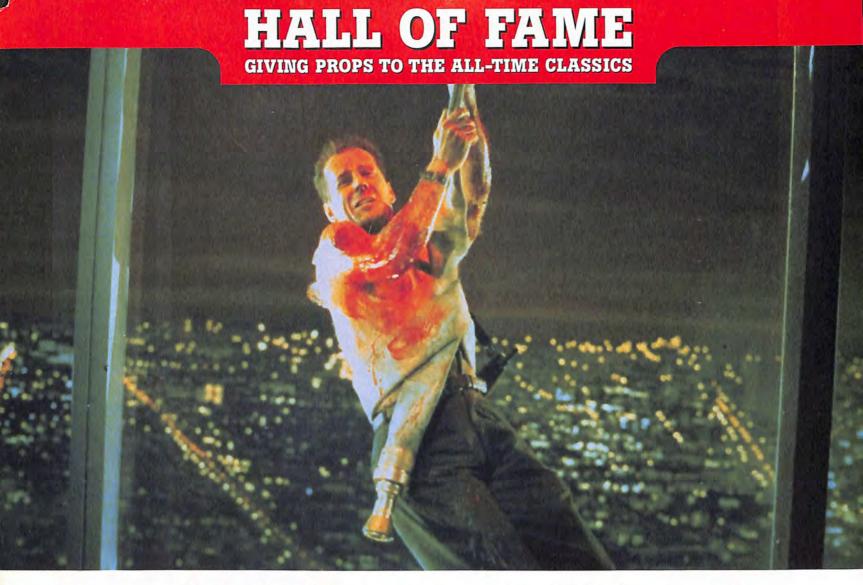












"I promise, I will never even *think* about going up in a tall building again."

DIE HARD (1988)



And you thought bungee jumping was an extreme sport? You ain't seen nothing until you've seen it done John-McClane-style — from 40 floors up, with only a hastilytied fire hose to keep you from pancaking, and

about a thousand pounds of C4 explosive providing the incentive to jump.

The hero of Roderick Thorp's source novel *Nothing Lasts Forever* is Joe Leland, a rather sad, over-the-hill ex-cop on a mission to rescue his daughter and two grandchildren from their high-rise peril at the hands of a band of skyscraper-

Jacking terrorists. Eastwood or Connery might have made a fine Leland, but it was decided that a younger face was needed to make this adaptation tick, so Leland was reincarnated as John McClane, a world-weary, wisecrackin' NYPD detective with (natch) an estranged wife to save.

The result was John McTiernan's *Die Hard*, a landmark piece of action cinema that rewrote the rules of bang-bang-you're-dead movie-making so completely and convincingly that it inspired an entire sub-genre: the "*Die Hard* on a..." movie. We've since been "treated" to such low-voltage brainwaves as *Die Hard* on a battleship, *Die Hard* on Alcatraz, *Die Hard* on a train, *Die Hard* in a hockey stadium, *Die Hard* on a bus, *Die Hard* on a cruise ship... the list goes depressingly on, yet none have even come close to equaling this classic, which towers over the genre like Nakatomi Plaza. It's been 12 years since *Die Hard* debuted – a lifetime in the ultra-competetive world of action-movies – and we've still to see anything that, pound for pound, can go the distance with it. Well, *The Matrix*, maybe. But then again – nah.

The action genre's often mocked for pushing audiences' suspension of belief beyond acceptable tolerances, but *Die*

Hard is one of the few high-octane flicks that manages to be both spectacular and credible; the product of a fat-free, watertight script combined with some of the most breathtaking action seen outside of Hong Kong. And then there's Bruce Willis, proving he could do more than put on a tux and smirk at Cybill Shepherd by stepping into (or rather, out of) McClane's shoes to create one of history's few believable action heroes – tougher than a 50-cent steak, but, crucially, far from invincible.

The inevitable sequels followed an equally inevitable trend, each one seeming just that little bit more hackneyed and desperate to deliver thrills than the last. Gone was the taut, claustrophobic cat-and-mouse feel of the original as McClane clambered around on speeding jumbo jets (Die Hard 2: Die Harder) and struggled to solve the riddles behind Jeremy Irons' lame nursery rhymes (Die Hard With a Vengeance). If there's anything to the long-standing rumor, Willis may be back as McClane one more time to take on yet another bunch of moustache-twisting do-badders, this time in a South American jungle setting. Our advice to Fox? Let sleeping classics lie.

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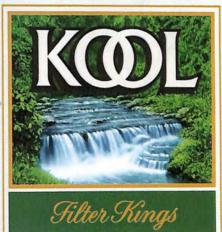
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